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SEPTEMBER 3, 1915

5 Cents.

FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

MAKING HIS MARK; OR, THE BOY WHO BECAME PRESIDENT.

*By A SELF-MADE MAN
AND OTHER STORIES*



A masked man, with a revolver in his hand, came down the steps. "Aha!" he exclaimed, with a smothered imprecation. "I've caught you, have I?" Mrs. Tarbox uttered a cry of dismay, while Johnny looked the picture of terror.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 3, 1915.

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MAKING HIS MARK

— OR —

THE BOY WHO BECAME PRESIDENT

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE GHOST OF THE OLD MILL.

"It's rainin', Vic!" exclaimed Johnny Tarbox, a stout, freckle-faced youth of eleven years. "I know'd it would."

His companion, a stalwart, good-looking lad of seventeen, whose name was Victor Bell, held out the back of his hand and a big drop of moisture fell upon it.

"You're right, Johnny; I'm afraid we're in for it after all. I thought we could beat it out, for we only had a mile to walk to reach your house."

At that moment a flash of lightning lit up the landscape with a whitish glow, and a few seconds later a heavy peal of thunder reverberated behind them.

Ever since the two boys left the home of Johnny Tarbox's aunt, who lived in a small cottage not far from the railroad at the mouth of Spuyten Duyvil Creek, en route for their home, which was in the neighborhood of Kingsbridge, heavy black clouds, charged with electricity, had been piling up in the northwest sky at a rapid rate, blotting out the stars in shoals, and threatening the entire firmament with an inky pall that contained all the elements of a good old-fashioned thunder-storm. The boys were walking rapidly along the road which followed the windings of the creek.

The hour was nine in the evening, and the landscape was lonesome and deserted.

Victor Bell was an orphan and boarded with Mrs. Tarbox, Johnny's mother.

He was employed by a manufacturing company as shipping clerk, and was regarded by the manager as an unusually smart boy.

Vic was very fond of outdoor sports, though business prevented him from devoting as much time to athletic exercises as he wished.

He was a member of a yacht and rowing club, which had a club-house on the upper reaches of the Harlem River.

He was also a crack boxer, and few of his associates cared to put on the gloves with him, owing to his slugging abilities.

Among other things, Vic enjoyed a good walk, and that afternoon he had accompanied Johnny Tarbox, who had a message to carry from his mother to her sister, and the boys had stayed to supper at Spuyten Duyvil.

When they set out on their return home the reflections of lightning above the distant horizon, and the far-off mutterings of thunder, warned them of an approaching storm.

Johnny was sure it would catch them before they had time to cover the distance of about a mile, while Vic was equally positive they would outstrip it.

They had a quarter of a mile yet to go when the first rain-drops began to fall.

It was then that Johnny uttered the exclamation with which this chapter opens.

"We'll get soaked t'rough and t'rough if we go on," grumbled the small boy, as the drops began to come down faster and faster each moment, and the southing wind gave signs of developing into a small gale. "Let's run over to the mill and get in out of the wet."

Vic gave a hurried backward glance at the threatening sky and concluded to follow his companion's suggestion.

The mill in question was a relic of Revolutionary days, and had long since been abandoned to idleness and the encroachments of time. It is no longer in existence.

It was situated on a small watercourse which was as dry as a salt herring for nine or ten months of the year, but during March and April conveyed a shallow contribution of the spring rains into the creek.

The great, ungainly water-wheel still poised itself, all rotten and moss-grown, over this dried-up waterway.

A small portion of the wooden chute which had originally carried the water from the dam to the wheel could yet be seen poking its useless nose out of a mass of rank vegetation that fringed what once had been the edge of the dam.

The mill itself, with foundation of solid stone, and its upper works of good live oak, had withstood the storms of more than a century in pretty good shape.

Like many other ancient edifices it had acquired the reputation of being haunted by the ghost of the original miller, who, tradition said, was a pretty bad sort of fellow.

Tradition also asserted that he had disappeared in a most mysterious manner one tempestuous night, after beating his wife and abusing his children.

As he never turned up again it was generally believed by the farmers who patronized the mill that Old Nick had carried him off.

However that may be, his spirit was said to cling to his old workshop, and his punishment was believed to be the eternal grinding of imaginary grain into invisible flour.

Victor Bell was familiar with all these ghost stories, but took no stock in them; while Johnny Tarbox's eagerness to seek shelter in the old building showed that spook stories had not formed a part of his education.

It was a lucky thing for the boys that the ancient mill was at hand, for barely had they dashed inside of the doorless opening of the first floor when the thunder-storm swooped down upon them in all its fury.

"This is a corker for fair," said Vic, as he glanced out into the night and saw the rain descending in sheets swished about by the high wind which accompanied the storm.

"Bet your life it is," responded Johnny; "but I don't care as long as I ain't out in it."

"This is a fine night for the old Dutch miller to make his rounds of the mill," grinned Vic.

"Ho!" ejaculated Johnny, contemptuously. "I don't believe no sich stuff."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth before there came up from the foundations of the building the sound of machinery in motion, intermingled with a steady thump, thump, like that given off by a stamping-mill.

"What the dickens is that?" exclaimed Vic, in a tone of some astonishment. "It sounds like the rumbling of machinery under this floor."

Johnny made no answer.

He didn't seem to be as confident as before.

As a matter of fact he was a bit scared.

There was no reason at all that there should be such sounds in the old deserted building.

What was it caused the mysterious noise?

That's what Vic wanted to know, and he was not a little puzzled by the monotonous jarring and thumping which was easily distinguishable between the frequent crashes of thunder now directly overhead.

A superstitious person would have gone into a blue funk, and possibly might have rushed out into the storm to escape from the place.

Vic, however, was blessed with strong nerves, and believed there was always a natural cause for every effect, however unaccountable.

"Seems rather mysterious, doesn't it, Johnny?" he said, calmly.

"Maybe dere's some one in the cellar poundin' away at somet'in'," answered Master Tarbox, edging nearer to the door, as if he thought it would be advantageous to be close to the opening in case it became necessary for any reason to scoot.

"I don't see why any one should be down in the cellar of this old rookery, nor can I imagine what he could be poundin' at."

"It must be somet'in', don't you t'ink, unless dere's such t'in's as spookses," replied Johnny, with an awesome glance about the empty floor, lit up as it was every few seconds by the reflection of the lightning.

"Don't you worry about spooks, Johnny. That's pure rot," said Vic.

"Wow! Look dere!" cried the boy, pointing his finger toward a doorless opening as a flash of electricity illuminated every corner of the room.

Vic looked, and truly it seemed as if some impalpable object, hesembling a man, melted away before his eyes.

"What did you see, Johnny?" he asked.

"I seen a man's face. An old man wit' white hair and goggle eyes, standin' in dat door," fluttered the little fellow, now thoroughly frightened.

Vic was willing to believe that the boy had seen something, for he was conscious of a similar impression; but that it was a ghost did not strike him favorably.

"I'll tell you what, Johnny, it's my opinion there are tramps in this old mill. At any rate, I'm going to find out for sure."

"I wouldn't if I was you," replied Johnny, nervously. "Dey might kick de stuffin' out of you."

"I think I see them doing it," answered Vic, with a grin, confident in his muscular abilities. "It would take more than one to handle me."

"Dere might be a whole mob down below."

Vic was willing to believe there might be several hobos in the cellar, and possibly it occurred to him that it was a reckless action on his part to disturb them; but his curiosity was aroused as to the cause of the strange rumbling and thumping which was going on below, and he decided to make a cautious investigation.

"You stay here, Johnny, while I go and see what I can see."

"Better take dat piece of wood dere to defend yourself wit'," suggested the youth, pointing at a club-like object which lay against one of the walls.

Vic picked it up and started for the door where the apparition, if such it was, had appeared.

At that moment the sounds below ceased as suddenly as they began, and not a sound was to be heard to disturb the death-like stillness of the place, save the occasional crash of the thunder without, the wild sweep of the wind, and the rain beating against the sides and roof of the mill.

Vic came to a pause at the door and looked into the dense darkness beyond.

The stoppage of the mysterious noise below, and the intense stillness which ensued, rather disconcerted him.

He listened for it to go on again; but it didn't.

He wondered if the persons below who had been making the noise, as he figured the matter out, had in some way become aware that he was about to make an investigation into it, and were lying in wait in the darkness to give him an unexpected and warm reception.

That wasn't a comfortable reflection, and he began to entertain some doubts as to the wisdom of venturing down into the depths all alone.

All of a sudden, while he stood there undecided what he had best do, there smote upon his ear, as well as Johnny's, a most unearthly cry, which seemed to penetrate every nook and corner of the old building.

It died away in a solemn wail, and all was silent and death-like as before.

To say that Vic wasn't startled would hardly be telling the truth.

He was startled, though not convinced that the cry was the result of any supernatural agency.

As for Johnny, he leaned up against the wall near the door, a very badly frightened boy.

A heavy clap of the receding thunder now shook the building.

As it died away in the distance the unearthly cry arose again, louder than before, succeeded by other cries, following one another in rapid succession, till the place seemed alive with moans and echoes of strange voices—some pitiful, as if in the agony of death; others screeching aloud in fiendish mirth for the blood and bones of mortal men to be borne down into the depths of the infernal regions.

These various sounds gradually died away and ceased for a while, and all was still again for several minutes.

Vic drew back into the corner away from the door, while Johnny began to shiver as with the ague, and his eyes stuck out like a lobster's, as some one began to mount the stairs.

The "ghost" came on with a thump—thump and clank—clank made by chains, till it reached the door, then it entered the room.

The "spook" was a large, broad-shouldered man, all covered with dust and flour.

He wore a loose, smock-frock, which reached below his waist, but what struck the sharp-eyed Vic was that this ghost of a hundred years back wore a modern pair of trousers and shoes to match.

He carried a lantern, modern, too, in one hand, and a lot of chain in the other, which he clanked as he walked.

After he had entered the room he held up the lantern so its light should shine on his face, and a truly horrible countenance it was—ghastly white, with one eye gouged out and blotches of red streaked over it.

It was enough to send a timorous person into a fit.

Swinging the lantern and shaking his chain, the ghost of the miller started direct for Johnny, apparently unaware that Victor Bell stood in the shadows six feet behind him.

Master Tarbox didn't wait for any closer acquaintance, but with a yell of fright, he darted out into the tail end of the storm, and made for the creek as fast as his legs could carry him.

The "ghost" went to the door waved his lantern aloft and shook his chain.

Then he turned about with a sardonical laugh and—removed his face.

That is, he took off the papier-mache mask which had covered his human countenance, revealing himself to be a plain, everyday mortal.

Tucking it under his arm, he walked to the door by which he had entered, without observing that he had frightened away only one of the two intruders, and Vic soon heard him descending to the cellar beneath.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE CELLAR OF THE OLD MILL.

"That seems to be a very human ghost after all," chuckled Vic, after the spook had retired to the depths whence he came.

"Poor Johnny! He was horribly scared," and the boy snickered again. "He'll have a wonderful tale to tell his mother when he gets home. If I don't follow him soon, he'll be willing to swear that I have been carried off by the ghost. How easily some people can be frightened! That imitation ghost never noticed me at all. I'll bet he thought I had lighted out at the first alarm. Now I wonder what his little game is? He certainly has some object in scaring persons away from

this mill. He probably has one or more companions with him in the cellar, for I am sure I recognized more than one voice in those screeches. I'll bet my spare change that there is something crooked going on below. That fellow didn't look at all like a tramp. This place may be the hiding-place for a gang of thieves; and probably they keep their booty here. I'm going to look into this thing. If my idea is correct it will be a feather in my hat to furnish the information that will lead to the capture of a gang of crooks. I might get a reward out of it. That would suit me all right."

Vic removed his shoes and, leaving them near the door, started to feel his way along the dark passage to the stairs.

As soon as he located them he began, with extreme caution, to descend.

They were pretty solid steps, considering their age, but the boy found several that were loose and creaked under his tread.

In a few minutes he reached the foot of the flight.

A moldy smell greeted his nostrils, not unlike that from an old vault.

He did not dare strike a match, lest the momentary glare should betray his presence there.

So he felt about till his hand rested on a rough board partition.

He followed this slowly along till he came to where it branched off, then he saw a bright light shining through a knot-hole.

Applying his eye to the opening, Vic looked in upon an enclosed space in the cellar.

Above were the flooring and under beams of the mill, almost completely covered by long, pendant, dirty spiders' webs, while on one side was the high, stone wall that composed the foundation of the building, the other three sides being constructed of comparatively new boards.

In one corner stood a rude kind of machine, like a large grindstone, whose long handle showed that it was worked by hand.

It was attached to a pulley on a small shaft above, close to the ceiling, by a narrow belt, and belting ran to other wheels on a counter-shaft.

Vic, who had a good idea of the uses of machinery in general, examined it narrowly, but could not see what function it was intended to perform, beyond making the wheels on the shaft and counter-shaft go around.

In another corner was a bunk provided with a pair of blankets and a mattress, which showed that some one slept in the room.

Further away was a small cookstove, while several pans hung from nails driven into the wall.

There was also an open cupboard with three shelves in which reposed a few plates, a cup and saucer, knives, forks, spoons, and other articles of a similar nature.

On ordinary kitchen table stood in the center of the enclosure.

On it was a lamp, provided with an Argand burner that threw a brilliant light; a black bottle with a whisky label, a small jug and two common glasses, each partly filled with an amber-colored liquor.

At this table were seated two men—one of whom was the individual who had just been impersonating the "miller's ghost," while the other was a tall, stalwart man, with a heavy, dark beard, the upper part of his face being hidden by a black mask similar to those worn by crooks when they wish to conceal their identity.

Upon the table in front of him lay several steel plates, one of which he had apparently been examining with a magnifying glass that now stood beside it.

Through an open door in the partition beyond the men Vic could see a bench littered with engraving tools used in fine metal work, and various pieces of thin, flat metal.

Close to the bench stood a machine that resembled a Washington hand printing press, such as is used in large printing offices for taking proofs of engravings.

"I wonder what kind of business these chaps are carrying on here?" Vic asked himself, as his eyes took in everything within his range of vision. "It can't be anything honest, or the workers wouldn't carry it on in the seclusion of this dismal cellar, and then work a fake spook business to scare off intruders. Perhaps they are bank-note counterfeiters. That man at the table seems to have an engraved plate just the size of a bank-note before him. That press yonder may be used to print them. I think the Government authorities ought to be notified about this plant on general principles."

While Vic was examining the rooms with his eyes, his ears were also taking in the conversation going on between the men.

"Well," said the man in the mask, "did you frighten those chaps off?"

"I'll bet I did!" chuckled his companion. "I'll warrant I scared the kid out of a year's growth. The other chap, I fancy, flew on hearing our patent unearthly screech."

"You are certain they are both gone?"

"Sure as death. Both of them are sure to spread the news of what they saw, and the old legend of the miller's ghost will be renewed with sufficient force to keep all stragglers away from here in future. I wouldn't be surprised if an account of this haunted mill got into the Sunday newspapers, with appropriate illustrations. That machine in the corner gives a first-class imitation of the rumbling of mill machinery in motion. It was a great idea of mine, wasn't it?"

"It was pretty clever," nodded the man, who seemed to be the head and front of whatever enterprise was carried on in the cellar of the mill. "Now, look here, Bender, as the object of this plant is now practically accomplished, you will, of course, see the necessity of getting rid of every bit of evidence that might subsequently involve either of us in trouble. The plates," continued the masked man, tapping those on the table, "are all in good condition, and it may be advantageous to preserve them. So just fetch that strong-box from the inner room and place them in it for safe-keeping."

"All right, sir," replied the other, respectfully, rising from his stool and entering the far room.

He presently returned, dragging an oblong oak box, ornamented with heavy brass corner-pieces, and studded with a great number of brass-headed nails.

He threw up the cover and took out a number of pieces of chamois skin.

Then lifting the plates one by one from the table he wrapped them in the soft chamois and packed them in the bottom of the box.

"Now," said the masked individual, reaching down and picking up a good-sized package from the floor at his feet, "here are the original treasury bonds of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, bearing the real official signatures—the bogus ones, with the counterfeit signatures, are now in the company's safe, and in a day or two will be sent to Wall Street to be sold, in pursuance of the resolution of the board of directors at their last meeting, authorizing the sale of the balance of the \$250,000 of Issue A in order to realize \$150,000 needed to enlarge their plant and market a newly invented machine, the patent of which they have just acquired."

"I suppose you want to place them in this box, too, until you are ready to dispose of them?" said his associate.

"Precisely," replied the other, handing him the package, which the man immediately deposited in the box, nearly filling it.

"Now," went on the masked man, taking a small packet from an inside pocket, "I have here \$50,000 in good American money, which the president of the company deposited in the office safe this afternoon. His intention is to use it to-morrow to pay for a plot of land he bought a month ago. I'm afraid, however, that he will be disappointed," and something very like a chuckle issued from his bearded mouth.

The speaker opened the packet and exhibited several layers of bills just as they had come from the bank.

"I am now in a position to pay you the \$5,000 I agreed to give you for your skilled labor in this scheme. As, however, I don't wish to lose sight of you for a little while, I have decided to pay you only \$1,000 on account at present, and hand you the balance later on."

His companion looked disappointed at this announcement.

"You needn't feel put out, Bender. You know our understanding was you were not to be paid until I began to realize on the bonds."

"That's true, sir; but that was because you did not see your way toward raising the money any other way. Now that you have come unexpectedly into possession of a big sum like \$50,000, you can afford to settle up on the nail. In fact, you ought to act liberally in this matter and double the \$5,000."

"Why should I?" asked the masked man, coldly.

"Because you yourself have admitted that my work has surpassed your expectations."

"That is true, Bender. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a bonus of \$2,000, and pay it now. The \$5,000 I'll pay you later."

"Make it \$3,000," said the other, smacking his lips at the sight of the money.

"You are greedy, Bender," objected the bearded man, "and I don't see why I should humor you. However, under the circumstances, I am disposed to be generous, so I'll make it \$3,000."

Thus speaking, the head schemer counted out six \$500 bills and passed them over to his companion.

"There, now," he said, rewinding the packet, "you have \$3,000 more than you expected to get."

"But not more than I have earned," returned the man, quickly. "Practically, I have been taking all the risk and inconvenience of this forgery job. I have lived down in this filthy hole for three months past, working at those plates under artificial light. I have been forced to live on a very meager diet, while you—"

"Pshaw! What's the use of kicking now, Bender. That's all past. You have more money now in your clothes than you have owned in years. Be happy."

"I'm not kicking, sir. I was merely trying to justify my right to that extra compensation. I wanted you to understand that I have earned every dollar of it."

"All right, Bender," replied the masked man, impatiently, "we won't argue the matter. You have the money, with \$5,000 more to come in the near future."

"I'm satisfied, sir."

"Very well," said the other, bending down, placing the packet of money in the box and locking it. "Now help me to place this out of harm's way."

The bearded man seized the lamp in one hand, and one of the handles of the box in the other, while Bender grabbed the other handle, then they started for a door in the partition behind which Vic was concealed.

CHAPTER III.

ONE OF THE WAYS BY WHICH VICTOR BELL EXPECTED TO MAKE HIS MARK.

Vic saw them coming and hastily struck a match in order to find some place where he could conceal himself.

Close to the stairs stood a number of empty barrels.

Into one of them he popped himself, just in the nick of time.

The door in the partition flew open and the two men, with the lamp and box, came out into the wide passageway.

The man with the mask led the way to a spot midway between the stone walls, and not far from the row of barrels.

Here they paused and put down the box.

"You have a rope inside, Bender," said the bearded man; "go and bring it."

While his associate was gone the masked man put down the lamp and, running his fingers over the floor, grasped something and lifted a trap-door, which opened up on hinges.

Then he waited for his companion to return.

Bender soon reappeared with several yards of stout rope.

The other man took it from him, wound one end of it twice around the box, and then they both lowered it into the hole.

The masked man flashed the light of the lamp down to see that everything was all right, and then let the trap-door fall back into place, where it fitted so snugly that no one not aware of its existence would have noticed it.

Vic, who was watching the proceedings with due caution over the rim of the barrel, noted the spot, with an eye to future developments.

"Now, Bender," said the bearded man, "I am going home. Your type cases and printing material, which you purchased as a blind to account for the presence of the press, you had better leave just as they are. Anybody investigating this cellar later on will then surmise that it was utilized by some poor hermit-printer, who carried on a desultory business in this building. To further carry out that idea, don't fail to leave your printed samples scattered about. You'd better dismantle that grindstone arrangement of yours, too. There will be no further need of ghostly manifestations on our part."

"All right, sir. Whatever you say goes."

"You'll carry your tools away with you, of course, and bury any tell-tale evidence that you leave behind. Lock the place up as securely as you can—that will be a bar to any ordinary curiosity-hunters—and take up your residence for the present at the hotel. I will call or send for you if I want to see you."

"Very well, sir."

"That's all, I guess. Good-night."

"Good-night, sir."

The bearded man handed the lamp to Bender, ascended the steps and left the mill, while the other returned inside the enclosure and bolted the door, leaving Victor Bell outside in the dark.

"Well, if this doesn't beat the Dutch!" exclaimed Vic, as he

climbed out of the barrel. "I seem to have accidentally got on to a pretty foxy scheme. I wonder who that masked chap is? His voice sounds a bit familiar to me, as if I had heard it more than once before. Why did he keep masked in the presence of his companion, who evidently knows who he is? There seems to be an element of mystery in this affair. The big fellow has not only deposited \$150,000 worth of bogus bonds of the Duplex Manufacturing Company in the company's vault in place of a similar amount of genuine ones, but he has also stolen \$50,000 in money from the office safe. He must be employed by the company in some capacity to enable him to do this in such a slick manner. Now, what officer or employee of the company do I know who is in the position to accomplish such a trick that looks like this chap?"

Vic cudgled his recollection, but couldn't find an answer to the query.

"I don't know of any one who wears a heavy, dark beard. The head bookkeeper is a man of his build, but he has a smooth face. The cashier is a small man. The vice-president is about the bookkeeper's size, but he has only a mustache. The manager—no, he's a gentleman and would not be guilty of a crooked act. I'll have to give it up. I can't place Mr. Masked-beard. I'll have to leave that cheerful duty to the police. Now, let me consider what I'd better do. The genuine bonds and most of the stolen money are in that box under yonder trap. Why shouldn't I take possession of the box myself and turn it over to the president of the company for examination? The police couldn't do much more than that if I laid my information before them, and they'd probably get most of the credit that ought to belong to me. That box contains at this moment nearly \$200,000 worth of the company's property. It ought to be worth a pretty tidy reward to restore it. If any one is entitled to a reward it should be me. Of course, I couldn't recover that box and carry it away from here alone. Who shall I get to help me? That's the question. It must be somebody I have confidence in, and who will be contented with a reasonable compensation out of what I get myself. Johnny is a stout kid, but whether he'll come back to the mill with me after what has happened is a matter of doubt. Maybe he would if his mother came along, too. She'd do anything for me. Johnny has got a good stout cart that would be just the thing to carry the box to the house. I'll just hustle home and lay my project before them. I needn't go into any particulars about what the box contains. I'll just tell them it was stolen from the Duplex Manufacturing Company's offices. That's all that is necessary. This will be a chance to distinguish myself in the company's services. Kind of show my zeal in its interests. Mr. Blake, the manager, told me the other day that I was a smart boy, and that some day I'd make my mark. Here's a chance to make it, or at least the first impression of it. I'm in luck. I wonder how much the board of directors will vote me for saving \$200,000 worth of property? It ought to be something worth while. Before I go I'll take a peep at that chap inside and see what he is doing. I'd like to get a line on him and see when he's going to dust out. It won't do to come back after that box while he is on the premises."

Vic went to his former peep-hole and looked through the partition.

The middle enclosure was shrouded in gloom.

The lamp stood on the bench in the far room, and Vic could see Bender packing up his tools.

"He ought to be away inside of an hour," thought the boy. "I wonder what time it is?"

He couldn't tell, as he did not carry a watch.

However, it wasn't a matter of any great importance.

He watched Bender a while, and, believing he would be ready to leave the place soon, he crept back to the ground floor of the mill, put on his shoes, and started for the creek road.

The night had cleared off as fine as silk, the stars were out in all their glory, and a cool breeze was blowing from the northwest.

In fifteen minutes Victor Bell was at the door of Mrs. Tarbox's cottage.

That good woman had heard her son Johnny's highly varnished account of the ghost of the mill, in which, being a person of good, common sense, she put little credence, and was trying to persuade Master John to return to the so-called haunted building with her, in quest of Vic, of whom she thought a great deal, when the subject of their thoughts opened the door and presented himself before them.

"Ho, Vic!" roared Johnny, as soon as he saw our hero, "I thought the ghost had you for sure. How did you get away?"

"You're dreaming, Johnny," chuckled Vic. "There wasn't any ghost."

"That's just what I thought," spoke up Mrs. Tarbox, with a confident shake of her head.

"Wasn't any ghost!" cried Johnny, incredulously. "Didn't I see it wit' me two eyes?"

"What you saw was a man playing off that he was a spook. That horrible looking face was only a mask he had on over his real countenance."

"Aw, get out!" retorted the Tarbox kid. "Dat was the real ghost of the miller. Do you t'ink I ain't got no eyes? Didn't I see the flour on his jacket? And den w'at about dem awful yells? You heard the spook machinery goin', too, didn't you? Now you say dat dere wasn't no ghost. W'at you take me for?"

"I thought you didn't believe in spooks, Johnny?" laughed Vic. "When we went into the mill at first, and I remarked that it was a fine night for the old Dutch miller to wander about, you said that was all rot."

"I've changed me mind," replied the youth.

"You'd have changed back again if you'd waited and seen what I saw."

"W'at did you see?" asked Johnny, with great interest.

"As soon as you skipped out the spook took off his face——"

"Took off his face!" exclaimed the lad, with a look of horror.

"His mask, I mean, and laughed at the fright he had caused you."

"He did?"

"He did. That gave him dead away, though I was certain anyway that he was not a real ghost."

"W'at did he do den?"

"Went back into the cellar."

"And w'at did you do?"

"I followed him."

"Into the cellar?"

"Yes."

"W'at did you see dere?"

"I saw the ghost talking to another man, who had a mask on his face, like a crook."

"Did dey see you?"

Vic shook his head.

"I found out that the man with the mask was up to a crooked game against the company I work for."

"The Duplex Company?"

"Yes. And that the supposed ghost has been helping him to work the scheme. They played the ghost dodge to keep inquisitive persons and stragglers away from the mill."

"W'at for?"

"Because they've got a box of stolen stuff belonging to the Duplex Company hidden there."

"Is dat a fact?" asked Johnny, with open mouth.

"It's a fact. Now, I mean to recover that box for the company, if you and your mother will help me do it."

"Of course, Johnny and I will help you, Victor," said Mrs. Tarbox.

"W'at you want us to do?" asked the youth, cautiously.

"I want you to get that cart of yours, and then we'll all go to the mill——"

"Nixy. No mill for me," replied Johnny, in an emphatic tone.

Vic assured Johnny that he had no cause to be afraid of revisiting the old mill, as there was not the slightest danger of his seeing a spook of any kind.

Mrs. Tarbox also insisted that her son must go along and help drag the box from the cellar, and the cart afterward.

Finally Johnny yielded a reluctant assent after Vic assured him he would give him a small part of any reward he got from the company.

"How much will you give me—a dollar?"

"Yes, I'll see you get a dollar, all right."

"Den I'll go along wit' you and ma."

He got his cart from the woodshed, into which Vic placed a small kerosene lamp to throw light on their labors, and then the party of three set out for the old mill.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW VIC'S PLANS WERE BLOCKED.

The night was so fine that none of the party bothered taking any head-gearing along.

They followed the creek road, Johnny dragging his cart, and

thinking about how he would spend the expected dollar when he got it.

When they turned up toward the mill, which looked rather ghost-like in the starlight, Johnny began falling further and further in the rear, for now that he had reached the scene of action his former fears assailed him once more.

Vic had to go back and urge him forward.

"I want you two to remain here outside the door until I go down into the cellar and see if the coast is clear," said Bell, when they reached the mill.

He removed his shoes and made his way below like a shadow.

All was dark and silent down there, for Bender had got through with his work and gone.

Satisfied that the place was deserted, Vic returned to Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny.

"Come along," he said. "Haul your cart inside, Johnny."

Johnny obeyed, though he cast a fearsome look around the dark room.

Vic took the lamp out of the cart, lighted it, and led the way to the cellar, followed by Mrs. Tarbox, with the kid bringing up the rear.

"W'at's behind dat partition?" asked Johnny.

"Don't you worry about what's in there," replied Vic, looking for the handle of the trap-door. "There's no spooks there at any rate."

"Dat suits me if dere ain't," grinned the youth, who seemed to have recovered a portion of his courage.

"Here it is," ejaculated Vic, putting down the lamp, grasping an iron ring and, giving a tug, lifted the trap.

He flashed the light down, and there, sure enough, lay the brass-bound oak box, just as the masked man had left it, rope and all.

The hole was probably a yard deep.

Vic jumped into it, grabbed the rope and tossed the loose end up to the boy.

"Now, Johnny, you and your mother catch hold and haul away, while I shove from down here."

They followed his directions.

Vic had just succeeded, with the help of Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny, in landing the heavy box on the floor of the cellar when they were treated to an unpleasant surprise.

A masked man, with a revolver in his hand, came down the steps.

"Aha!" he exclaimed, with a smothered oath, "I've caught you, have I?"

Mrs. Tarbox uttered a cry of dismay, while Johnny looked the picture of terror.

As for Vic, he recognized the intruder in an instant, and his chagrin was intense.

His brilliant plan for recovering the company's property was clearly blocked.

"Well, what have you people got to say for yourselves?" demanded the bearded man.

"You ought to answer that question yourself," replied Vic, fearlessly, leaping from the hole.

"What do you mean by that?" thundered the man, glaring at him through his mask.

"I mean that you are a forger and a thief, and the proofs are in this box."

The rascal was staggered by the boy's words.

He recovered himself almost instantly.

"How dare you address such language to me, you young whelp?" he cried, nervously fingering his weapon, as if he had half a mind to use it on the boy.

"You know whether you deserve it or not," replied Vic, who was angry clear through, and perhaps a bit reckless, on account of his failure to get away with the box.

"I've a great mind to shoot you, you young monkey!" retorted the furious man.

"And add murder to your other crimes," answered Vic, desperately.

"Get out of this cellar, all of you!" ordered the rascal, threatening them with his revolver.

There was nothing to do but obey, for it was impossible to say how far the man's patience would last.

Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny were only too glad to get away now, but Vic followed them grudgingly.

The masked man, however, detained the lad, as he put his foot on the steps.

"How did you find out that box was in that hole, and what do you know about its contents?" he hissed.

"I'm not telling everything I know," answered Vic, independently.

With a snarl of rage the masked stranger reversed his re-

volver and struck the brave boy a stunning blow on the head with the butt.

Vic dropped on the stairs like an ox stricken in the shambles and lay there unconscious.

The man looked at him a moment, then catching him in his arms carried him to the opposite side of the cellar and laid him upon the floor.

Then he went upstairs and saw that Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny were waiting outside of the mill for Vic.

"Leave that wagon and go home," he cried, sternly.

Johnny dropped the handle of his cart as though it had suddenly become red-hot.

"We are waiting for Victor Bell," said Mrs. Tarbox.

"You needn't wait for him," replied the man, brusquely. "Go!"

They went.

The masked man seized the cart and drew it inside.

"I'll have to remove that box from this place now," he muttered. "I cannot understand how that young Bell managed to find out so much. He called me a forger and a thief. Evidently he knows something about this bond scheme of mine. How could he have got hold of his information? I don't like the looks of this at all. I can see that he has not recognized me, but a premature expose of the counterfeiting bonds would block me at every point, and render all my plotting useless. The false bonds would be destroyed, and an entire new series would be issued to replace them, while those of Series A already sold would be called in and exchanged for similar bonds of the new series, so that the original blanks now in that box would become absolutely valueless, in spite of the fact that they were signed by the officers of the company."

The bearded man swore roundly as he considered the critical outlook of the situation.

It was clear to him that something must be done, and that at once, to prevent his plans going astray.

"That boy is sure to go to the president of the company to-morrow morning and tell all he knows. I must prevent him doing that at any cost. How shall I manage it? I can't detain him a prisoner in the mill here, for when he doesn't return to Mrs. Tarbox's, that woman will be sure to go to the police and have this building searched. I'll have to consult with Bender."

The masked man returned to the cellar where the lamp still glowed brightly. He took the rope off the box, and with it tied the unconscious Vic hand and foot, so that he could not get away of his own accord.

Then he shut down the trap, drew the brass-bound box under the stairs and covered it with one of the empty barrels.

He turned the lamp out and left the mill, heading straight for Kingsbridge, after removing the mask from his face and putting it in his pocket.

A half hour's walk brought him to the Kingsbridge Hotel. Going to the desk of this small hostelry he asked the night clerk if Adam Bender was stopping there.

"Yes. He registered an hour or so ago and was shown to a room on the second floor."

"I want to see him on urgent business," said the bearded man.

"Do you wish to go to his room?"

"Yes."

The clerk called the night porter and told him to show the gentleman to Room 29 on the second floor.

On reaching the room the bearded man rapped loudly on the door.

"Who's there?" demanded Bender.

"Duplex," was the reply, in tones that the skilled engraver and printer recognized at once.

He was in bed, but he got up quickly, for he was greatly surprised at this unexpected visit from his employer.

It seemed to indicate that something was wrong.

"Come in," he said, opening the door.

The bearded man entered and closed the door.

"Don't light up, but put on your clothes and come with me."

"Anything wrong?" asked Bender.

"Yes, and I want you to help me correct it," replied the visitor shortly.

CHAPTER V.

VIC TURNS THE TABLES ON THE MASKED MAN.

On their way back to the old mill the bearded man explained to his accomplice what had occurred.

"Do you know of any place in this vicinity where that boy

can be safely kept a prisoner until I shall have disposed of the bonds in the market?" he asked Bender.

"The cellar of the mill is the best place I know of," replied his companion.

"That won't do. The police will be sure to search the mill when the boy fails to turn up at his home, for that Mrs. Tarbox will tell all she knows."

"Then you'd better get him away from this neighborhood altogether," replied Bender.

"That's easier proposed than carried out," said the bearded man.

Bender suggested several other ways of keeping Victor Bell in subjection for a short period of time, none of which however, met with his employer's approbation.

By that time they arrived at the mill and entered the building.

"I've got to remove the box, too, and it's a pretty heavy thing to handle," said the man with the beard. "That boy fetched a small cart for the purpose of carrying it away and I took possession of it for a like purpose."

"Where are you going to take it to?" asked Bender.

Instead of answering the question, his companion uttered an exclamation of surprise and anger.

"What's the matter?" inquired Bender.

"The cart is gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes. I left it here in the passageway, and it is not there now."

The speaker flashed a match, but the passageway was quite empty.

"Then somebody has been here while you were away," said Bender.

The other rushed downstairs to the cellar and struck another match.

His worst fears were realized.

His prisoner was gone, and not even the rope with which he had been bound was left behind.

The lamp was gone, too.

"That woman and her son must have come back and released him," snarled the big rascal.

"And have they taken the box?" asked Bender.

The bearded man went to the barrel under which he had left the brass-bound box and to his rage found that gone also.

"I left that cub bound and insensible, and I hid the box under this barrel. It seems to me that the disappearance of the box is more mysterious than that of the boy, for I am sure no one was around when I stowed it under that barrel."

"Whoever liberated the boy brought him to his senses, and then he searched the passage here on the chance that you concealed the box in a new place. That's my idea of the way he found the box."

The two men examined the stairs closely and found marks that showed the box had been pushed or dragged up to the floor above.

Then they saw where the cart had been brought to the head of the flight for the purpose, of course, of loading the heavy box upon it.

The track of the wheels could be plainly seen in the dust.

They followed these tracks to the door, and down the grassy lane to the road, for the recent heavy rain had made the earth soft and yielding, and capable of receiving any impression.

The weight of the box made the track of the wheels so plain, that the two men had no difficulty in seeing where it had turned into the creek road in the direction of Kingsbridge.

They were able to follow the narrow wheel-marks right along down the road, till they noted where they turned off up a side street.

Here they almost lost sight of them, but by patient scrutiny they recovered the tracks, and with some difficulty traced them directly to the Widow Tarbox's house.

"Well, we've got the box located at any rate," said the bearded man. "The next thing will be to recover it. There's \$47,000 cold cash in it, besides those bonds. If this bond scheme is going to be a failure after all, I can't afford to lose that money, too."

"You ought to have carried the money home with you that time," said Bender.

"I thought it was perfectly safe in the box. I had not the slightest suspicion that a third party would discover any of our secrets."

"It seems funny how that boy came to get on to you."

"It does that. I don't understand it."

"Well, what are you going to do now? The box is probably in that cottage. How are you going to recover it?"

"We must wait for an hour or two and then force an entrance."

"That will be burglary," said Bender.

"What of it? I must get possession of that box at all hazards."

"How about the boy? He'll spoil the bond scheme in any case."

"Maybe not, if I work quickly. I can perhaps succeed in hypothecating a large part of the bonds before the news leaks out."

"It would be better if we could think of some scheme to entice him from the house before morning. In order to prevent the failure of the bond matter, you must keep him from telling what he knows about it."

Bender's suggestion struck his companion as being a good one, and they put their heads together to think out a plan to accomplish their purpose.

While they are thus engaged, we will explain how Vic got away from the mill during the absence of the chief schemer, and how it happened that the box vanished with him.

The crack that the boy got on his head from the butt of the bearded man's revolver, was a heavy one, and it sent his brains wool-gathering for a while.

He was not unconscious as long as his enemy imagined, for when the masked man began binding his arms and legs he was coming to.

While the rascal was putting the box under the barrel, Vic had revived sufficiently to see, in a dreamy kind of way, what the man was doing.

Then he saw the villain blow out the light, and heard his heavy steps as he ascended the stairs to go to Kingsbridge after Bender.

Five minutes later Vic was once more in full possession of his senses.

It was then that he realized that he was bound hand and foot.

The rope, however, was too large to thoroughly accomplish the purpose it had been put to, and in a few minutes the boy was able to wriggle out of his bonds.

Then he stood up and began to consider the situation.

The hiding of the box under the barrel, the blowing out of the lamp and the retreat of the masked man now all came back to his mind.

"By George! He left that box under one of those barrels unless I dreamed that he did. I'll soon find out."

He struck a match, lit the lamp and then started to examine the barrels.

He remembered they had all stood mouth upward.

Now one of them was reversed.

Lifting that barrel up the brass-bound box stood revealed.

"That chap isn't as smart as he thought he was. I'll just steal a march on him while he's away. When he gets back he'll find that not only have I flown the coop, but the box has gone, too. I'll drag it up the stairs and conceal it somewhere in the bushes until to-morrow. I must do it without leaving any tell-tale tracks if I can."

He tied the rope around the box once more and dragged it to the foot of the steps.

Then the thought occurred to him to replace the barrel in the same position in which it had been left by the masked man.

After doing that he, with much labor, hauled the box up step by step until he reached the passage above.

He then went back for the lamp.

As he placed it on the floor its light revealed Johnny's cart drawn up against the wall.

"Well, who would have thought of finding that here. Master Johnny must have abandoned it in his hurry to get away. It is just the thing I want. Instead of hiding the box around the outside of the mill as I intended, I can now carry it right home along the road. Talk about luck! Things couldn't have turned out better."

So Vic loaded the box on the cart and started for Kingsbridge.

He had only a third of a mile to go to reach the Tarbox cottage, and it didn't take him long to cover that distance.

He found the widow and her son waiting for him to return, and great was their astonishment when they found that he had not only brought back the cart, but the box itself as well.

"However did you do it?" asked Mrs. Tarbox, while Johnny gazed at the box and wagon with distended eyes.

Vic told his story briefly.

"What do you suppose that man will do when he returns to the mill and finds that you have escaped and carried her off with you?" asked the widow.

"I don't see that he can do anything now," replied the boy, with a grin.

"He looks like a determined kind of man. He might trace you to this cottage."

"That's right. He might. I didn't think of that," said Vic. "I believe he went to get his friend to help him dispose of the box. They won't give the matter up without a struggle, for the contents of that box is too valuable to the masked rascal, at any rate."

"What's in it?" asked Johnny, curiously. "Money?"

"Yes. There's a considerable sum of money in the box, but there's something more valuable to that masked man than money."

"What can be more valuable than money?" Johnny wanted to know.

"There are \$150,000 worth of bonds that can be turned into money by a person who knows how to do it."

"You don't say," gasped the Tarbox boy.

"I really don't think it is safe to keep this box in the house," went on Vic. "It is possible those chaps may be able to track me here. In that case the masked man is desperate enough to break in and try to recover the box, with the assistance of his partner. He's got a revolver, you know, and I wouldn't like to run against it."

"He might murder us all in our beds," said the widow, fearfully.

"I don't think he'd go as far as that," replied Vic; "but one of us might get badly hurt, just the same, for I wouldn't let him get away with the box if I could help it."

"You might put the box in the cellar and cover it up," said Mrs. Tarbox.

"That chap would search the house from cellar to garret to find it."

"Then what do you think of doing with it?"

"There's an old dry well at the end of your lot. It is almost entirely filled up with earth and rock. I thought I'd hide it there until the morning, when Johnny and I could haul it out again and wheel it over to the company's offices."

"Dat would be a fine place," said Johnny, enthusiastically. "No one ever goes down dere."

"Get the lantern," said Vic, "and we'll take it to the old well."

Johnny got the lantern and lighted it, then Vic opened the kitchen door and they both go hold of the wagon tongue and drew the cart into the yard.

Across the yard they went, and thence through a gate that led into the rear of the lot which was used as a pasture for the widow's cow.

The dry well was at the extreme end of this, and toward it the two boys walked, dragging the cart, quite unconscious that they were watched and followed in the gloom by the very men they were trying to circumvent.

CHAPTER VI.

DAME FORTUNE SIDES AGAINST VIC.

The bearded man and his companion were leaning over the corner of the front fence of Mrs. Tarbox's little property, figuring on how they could manage to entice Victor Bell from the cottage, when Bender's sharp eyes detected the flash of light on the flagging of the yard facing the kitchen when Vic opened the door so that he and Johnny could drag the cart outside on the way to the dried-up well.

"Look!" whispered Bender, "there's something going on over there."

The bearded man recognized the two boys and the cart before the widow closed the door behind them.

"They're up to something, those boys," he said. "We must follow them."

They jumped the fence into the adjoining lot and hurried forward till they got in line with the shadowy forms of the boys, and then they kept pace with them.

"I wonder if they've got the box in the cart?" said the chief rascal. "They seem to be dragging a load between them."

"What can they be doing with it out here?" replied Bender. "One would think they'd keep it in the house."

"Well, they're dragging something in that cart, that's certain. And it is a weighty load, too. Maybe they intend to hide the box out here somewhere."

"Seems kind of foolish for them to do that," replied Bender.

"You can never tell what a boy will do," replied the other. "However, one thing is certain, that Victor Bell is walking right into our hands. I'll warrant he won't get away from me as easily as he did before. If they haven't the box in that cart I'll be much surprised. It would be great luck if we recover both the box and the boy at one sweep, and without all the trouble we anticipated."

"They've stopped by a pile of stones near the corner of the fence," said Bender.

The two men crept cautiously toward Vic and Johnny.

Vic flashed the lantern down the dry well and saw that it was about seven feet deep.

"Now, Johnny," he said, "we'll lower the box into this hole, cover it with those old boards and then return to the house."

Placing the lantern on the ground, Vic grabbed hold of one end of the box and the Tarbox boy the other, and started to lift it from the cart.

Then it was that the two men sprang over the fence and rushed upon them.

The arch-rascal had resumed his mask again, and it was he that shoved his revolver into Vic's face and ordered him to give in, while Bender attended to the frightened Johnny Tarbox.

Then the rascal jumped upon him, turned the dazed boy over and bound his wrists together with his handkerchief.

Bender tied Johnny in a similar way, dropped him into the dry well and placed the boards over the top to drown his cries.

Taking the loose end of the rope that was attached to the box, Bender tied it around Vic's body so that he couldn't get away.

"Now, young man," said the masked man, sternly, "if you utter a sound to attract any notice I'll knock the whole top of your head in with the butt of my revolver. I don't intend that you shall escape me this time."

Then he told Bender to take a section of the fence down so they could drag the cart through.

As soon as this was accomplished, they started to move on, and Vic was obliged to accompany them.

He would have put up a stiff kick against their abandoning Johnny in the dry well, but that he knew Mrs. Tarbox would come down there when they failed to return to the house within a reasonable time, and she would be sure to hear her son's muffled cries for help.

In ten minutes they reached the creek road and followed it toward the mill.

It was now after midnight, and the late moon had risen in the sky.

Its light illuminated the banks of the creek, and brought out many objects that before had been invisible.

Among others, a good-sized rowboat that was tied to a stake in the bank.

The sight of the boat suggested something to Bender, and he took his companion aside and held a consultation with him in tones too low to reach Vic's ears.

The masked man agreed with whatever proposal it was that he advanced.

Bender then stepped down to the edge of the creek, and, laying hold of the boat's painter, drew her close in.

Vic judged that they intended to embark in the little craft.

He was not wrong in this surmise, for Bender and the bearded man took hold of the brass-bound box, carried it down to the water's edge and put it on board of the boat; Vic, of course, being obliged to follow them as the rope dragged him along.

"Get in!" commanded the masked man to the boy, and Vic, seeing no way of avoiding the issue, got in the boat.

The two men followed him, and shoved off into the creek.

They seized the two pairs of oars that lay in the bottom of the boat and began rowing up toward the Hudson River.

They took things easy, and the boat went along slowly.

In three-quarters of an hour they reached and passed under the railroad bridge which spanned the mouth of the creek, and soon came out on the broad Hudson.

They headed downstream, and, as the tide was on ebb, the boat made very fair progress.

Vic wondered where they were aiming for.

He could gather no information from their conversation, which was carried on in a desultory sort of way, and in low tones.

They might have covered a mile in this way, keeping within the shadows of the shore, when a small sailboat at anchor loomed up ahead.

They were quite close to her before either of the men no-

ticed her presence, though Vic had had his eye on her for some time.

Bender stopped rowing and said something to his companion.

The bearded man nodded, whereupon Bender headed for the sailboat.

Rowing alongside of her, the engraver stepped on board.

He saw that the slide which covered the entrance to the little cabin was padlocked.

It was clear to Vic that his captor intended to take possession of the catboat.

They did so by lifting the box into the cock-pit and ordering Vic to follow.

After securing the rowboat astern, Bender took the stops off the sail and hoisted it.

Pushing the boom out to the leeward, Bender called the other to assist him in getting up the anchor.

As soon as it was clear of the bottom, the boat began to move off shore.

When the anchor had been secured on deck, Bender, who appeared to be perfectly familiar with the management of a sailboat, took the tiller and steered for the center of the river.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KEY OF THE BRASS-BOUND BOX.

There was a very fair breeze on the river, and the catboat glided along as if on greased ways.

After a little while the masked man spied a short boat-hook under the seat.

He picked it up and smashed the padlock which secured the cabin door.

Opening the slide, he went inside and looked around.

He lighted a lantern that hung from a hook in the forward end.

There were two bunks in the cabin—one on either side.

The lockers contained various odds and ends, and among other things a bottle of whisky, some glasses, and a box of crackers.

The bearded man brought the bottle and two of the glasses out into the cock-pit, filled out a good drink for himself and his accomplice, and the two drank to the success of their enterprise.

Then the chief rascal removed the rope from the box, and, ordering Vic to hold the tiller steady, he and his associate carried the box into the cabin.

"Now, now, young man," he said to the boy, when they returned, "get into the cabin and stay there. If you want to turn in on one of the bunks, you are at liberty to do so."

"Aren't you going to take that rope off me?" asked Vic.

Without a word, the masked man relieved him of the rope.

"How about my hands?" continued the boy.

"If you'll promise to be reasonable, and not make any fuss, I'll untie your wrists," he replied.

"What can I do against you two and a revolver?" was Vic's answer.

"Not much," retorted the man, with a short laugh.

Then he released the boy, pushed him into the cabin, and closed the slide upon him.

"This is pretty fierce," muttered Vic, as he sat down on the edge of one of the bunks and began to consider the situation. "Just to think, after getting hold of this box for the second time, those rascals should be hovering around at the very moment Johnny and I started out to conceal it in the dry well. It's a regular diamond-cut-diamond game between us. At the present moment the other side is on top. These rascals are heading down the river for the lower part of the island. I suppose their plan is to keep me aboard of this sailboat. Well, we'll see if they can do it."

Vic, now that he had nothing to do, began to feel a bit tired from the exertions he had undergone in connection with the brass-bound box.

He stretched himself out on the bunk, to ease his limbs and to figure out some plan by which he might overreach his captors.

Before he had accomplished much in the latter line, sleep overcame him, and he was soon lost in deep slumber.

He was in this condition when the bearded man entered the cabin half an hour later.

"He is safe enough for the balance of the night," thought the big rascal, regarding the boy with a look of satisfaction.

"I guess I'll have no great trouble, now, holding on to him until I have disposed of those bonds. I must begin operations at once. The Seaboard National Bank has agreed to market for the Duplex Company the entire \$150,000 of the treasury bonds, and to advance \$100,000 on receipt of the securities. I must now avail myself of this opportunity to get rid of the bonds in bulk, instead of following up my original plan of disposing of the securities by degrees at intervals, as I saw the chance to do so. This course is now rendered necessary by the complications caused by this boy who has, in some mysterious manner, become more or less acquainted with the fact that the company's reserve bonds have been forged, and he either knows or suspects that the contents of the box will prove that the Duplex Company is the victim of a crooked game. Fortunately, I have a few of the company's letter-heads in the bond package. I can use one of them to provide myself with a proper authorization, signed by the president to complete the arrangement with the bank and get the \$100,000 in cash, instead of by check."

The bearded man opened the box and got one of the letter-heads in question.

Under the lantern there was a shelf which worked on hinges.

The rascals raised it and secured it in a position to use as a writing table.

Then, with a fountain-pen which he took from his vest pocket, he wrote a letter addressed to the president of the Seaboard National Bank, which authorized the bearer, Mark Manning, to receive from the bank an advance payment of \$100,000 in cash on delivery of \$150,000 worth of treasury stock, Series A, of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, said stock to be marketed at par by the bank, and the balance due the company, less commission, interest on the \$100,000, and other expenses connected with the transaction, to be held on deposit by the bank, subject to the company's order.

The bearded man then forged the signature of Harley Sherwood, president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, at the bottom of the writing.

He then folded the letter, placed it in one of the company's envelopes, sealed and addressed it to the bank.

"That will do the business all right," he said, with a look of satisfaction, dropping the envelope into the box, on top of the package of bonds, closing the lid down, and locking it.

As he was about to remove the brass key from the lock, he heard his companion outside give a loud shout, and he became aware that the sailboat was bobbing up and down on a heavy surge.

Springing to his feet, he fell over on the bunk where Vic lay asleep, and the impact of his body awoke the boy.

Recovering himself, the masked man rushed into the cock-pit, to find out what was the cause of the trouble.

He discovered that the sailboat had got caught between a Fort Lee ferryboat, which had just left her slip at One Hundred and Thirtieth street, Manhattan, and a string of canal boats coming down the river, close in shore.

The ferryboat stopped and backed just in the nick of time to avoid a collision with the catboat.

The wobbling of the sailboat dumped Vic out on the floor, his face coming within a narrow margin of striking the brass-bound box.

As he sat up, wondering what had happened, his eye lighted on the key that still remained in the lock.

Glancing out into the cock-pit, he saw that both his captors were looking toward the ferryboat.

Here was an opportunity to get possession of the key of the box and hide it.

That would put a difficulty in the rascal's way of opening it, causing delay that might possibly lead to some advantage on Vic's side of the game.

So the boy snatched out the key, hid it under the inner corner of the bunk's mattress, then lay down and awaited possible developments.

In a little while the bearded man, resuming his mask, re-entered the cabin and went to the box for the key.

Not finding it in the lock, he looked on the floor, then felt in his pockets, and then all over the cabin deck.

Not seeing any trace of it, he regarded the motionless boy with some suspicion.

He watched Vic for several minutes, and then seemed satisfied that his prisoner was still asleep.

"Where could that key have gone?" he muttered, with an impatient oath. "I thought I left it in the lock, but it must have been in my fingers when the boat commenced to jump up and down, and it flew somewhere."

He looked all over the bunk where Vic lay quietly enough

in his assumed sleep, and then transferred his attention to the opposite bunk.

There was no sign of the missing key.

After that there wasn't a nook or corner the masked man didn't look into in his search, but without success.

Vic heard him swear a good bit as he fumbled around with the lantern.

Finally he gave the matter up, for the present at least, and went out into the cock-pit to talk to his associate in villainy.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED.

Vic chuckled to himself over the masked rascal's disappointment.

"He'll make another and more thorough search presently, when he finds me awake, so I'll just hide that key in my shoe."

The boy glanced out into the cock-pit, and, seeing that the two men were conversing together, he cautiously removed the brass key from the spot where he had hidden it and shoved it into his shoe, where, as it was small and flat, like a Yale lock key, it did not inconvenience him very much.

Then he turned over and went to sleep again.

It was broad daylight when he woke up, much refreshed.

The bearded man was asleep on the opposite bunk, with his mask still over the upper half of his face.

Vic was curious about that mask which, as far as his experience went, the rascal wore continuously.

"I wonder when he takes that thing off?" the boy asked himself. "He certainly can't go about in the daylight, where people can see him with that mask on. I'd like to get a good, square look at his face, to see if I have ever seen him before. At times his voice seems familiar to me, but that may be my imagination, or because it resembles the voice of some one I know."

Vic got up and stuck his head out of the cabin entrance.

The sailboat was lying at anchor in the neighborhood of Pier 1, North River.

Adam Bender was reclining in the cock-pit, smoking a cigar. He saw the boy at once.

"Go back!" he said, curtly, motioning him back, at the same time significantly tapping the butt of his employer's revolver, which reposed in his pocket.

Vic didn't fear that the man had any intention of using the weapon in daylight and in that neighborhood, where any such demonstration would have been sure to attract attention.

It flashed through his mind that, by a bold effort, he would be able to make his escape; but if he succeeded in doing so he would probably lose sight of the rascals and the box, maybe for good, and that did not fit in with his plans, which were to recover the box and, if possible, have the two men arrested.

So he drew in his head and returned to his bunk.

He wanted to impress the man with the idea that he was more or less cowed, and thus fool them into the belief that he was not dangerous.

In a little while the bearded man awoke and got up.

"So you're awake, young man, are you?" he remarked. "Well, it's daylight now, and I'll have to restrict your movements, otherwise you might give us a good deal of trouble. If all goes well, I shall let you go this afternoon, so don't grow impatient over a few hours' confinement."

He called Bender inside, and between them they bound Vic's hands behind his back and tied a handkerchief over his eyes and mouth.

Then, after the bearded man had made a close search of the bunk, for the missing key—not finding it, of course—Vic was pushed down on it, and the red curtains drawn in front, entirely concealing his presence there.

The boss rascal then removed his mask and put it in his pocket.

Then he and Bender went all over the cabin, in an effort to find the lost key.

The bearded man indulged in a good deal of profanity when they finally gave up the job in disgust.

"I can't see where it could have got to," he said, moodily.

"You might have dropped it out in the cock-pit," suggested Bender.

"I don't think so, but there is no harm in looking."

The two men left the cabin, and drew the slide after them.

Their search outside for the key was equally vain.

"I s'pose I'll have to get a locksmith to open it," said the bearded man, at length, testily. "I want to take those bonds up to Wall Street at eleven o'clock."

"You can't bring a locksmith aboard with that boy in the cabin."

"I'll fix him. You'd better go ashore and get your breakfast at a restaurant. Take that small tin pail with you and bring off some coffee and a couple of sandwiches for his breakfast. First go to a drug store and get a small vial of tincture of opium and some cotton—to relieve a toothache, understand? I'll dose his coffee with the laudanum. That will send him into a deep sleep for the rest of the day. By the time he awakes, the both of us ought to be out of the reach of danger."

"That's a good idea. I was wondering how you expected to keep him quiet, unless you meant to keep him bound and gagged as he is now."

Vic had heard every word they said, for he had crawled out of the bunk as soon as he heard the slide close to.

"So that rascal is going to get a locksmith to open the box, and, before he does that, he is going to drug me. Perhaps he will, but I rather fancy, now that I am on to his little game, that he won't. I wish I could get my arms free—I would try to work a little surprise on those villains."

Vic heard Bender draw the rowboat alongside, get into her and shove off.

"He'll be gone probably three-quarters of an hour," thought the boy. "What can I do in that time?"

He determined to employ the time in trying to free his hands, if he was not interfered with.

He soon found that they had bound him too securely to admit of that.

"I'll have to give it up," he said, in a discouraged tone. "They've got me dead to rights this time. I must fall back on strategy—that is, I must spill that drugged coffee somehow while pretending to drink it, and then simulate unconsciousness. If the game works, I may be able to do something; if it fails, I can't be any worse off than I am now."

He crawled into the bunk again, and was only just in time to avoid being discovered by the bearded man, who opened the slide and entered the cabin.

Vic heard him hovering about the place a little while, and then he went into the cockpit again, leaving the slide open.

Something over half an hour elapsed, and then Bender returned.

He brought the tin-pail half full of coffee, a couple of meat sandwiches and the vial of laudanum.

The bearded man took the things from him and entered the cabin alone.

He removed the cover of the can, tasted the coffee and, seeing that it was properly sweetened, he emptied half of the contents of the vial into it, stirring it well with a spoon he found in the locker underneath the bunk.

Then he pushed back the curtain, after resuming his mask, took the handkerchief from Vic's eyes and untied his hands.

"There's your breakfast," he said, grimly. "You see, we're not going to starve you. Eat it up, and if you continue to behave yourself you'll get some dinner later on."

He handed the boy the sandwiches and the tin-pail of coffee.

Then he sat down on the opposite bunk, apparently intending to watch Vic fall into the trap.

CHAPTER IX.

VIC ON TOP ONCE MORE, AND WHAT HE FINDS ON THE RIVER.

Vic began to eat one of the sandwiches, while he held the tin of coffee in his other hand.

He stole a glance across at the bearded man, who sat a few feet away, and the man's presence and evident watchfulness disconcerted him.

Under present conditions it wasn't possible to fool him, and the boy began to feel desperate.

He determined not to drink the coffee under any circumstances.

He had about concluded to let it slip, as if by accident, out of his fingers, and thus go to waste on the floor, when a piece of good luck befriended him.

Bender suddenly called his employer out into the cockpit, and Vic took instant advantage of his temporary absence to empty the entire contents of the tin can under the mattress of the opposite bunk.

He was finishing his second sandwich when the bearded man returned and noted, with satisfaction, the boy drain apparently the last of the drugged coffee.

Vic put down the empty can and wiped his lips with the back of his hand.

"That was good coffee," he remarked, with a forced grin.

"I'm glad you liked it," replied the man, dryly. "Turn in on that bunk," he added, "and lie quiet, and I won't tie your hands."

Vic, with a thrill of hope, obeyed with apparent meekness, and his captor drew the red curtains in front of him.

"His idea is to give the drug time to work. He thinks I will be in a sound stupor shortly. I wonder if I can give a successful imitation of such a thing."

He heard the chief rascal talking to his companion through the cabin opening, and he listened with all his ears.

They were speaking in too low a tone for him to make out what they said.

At length he heard the bearded man say:

"He ought to be off by this time. I'll take a look at him."

The boy was now face to face with the ticklish operation of simulating a heavy slumber, and he succeeded in performing his part well enough to deceive the rascal.

The man, feeling quite sure that Vic was helpless for several hours, removed his mask and announced to his companion his intention of going ashore for his own breakfast.

"I'll return in about an hour," he said, "and will bring a locksmith with me."

"All right," answered Bender.

The bearded man then left the catboat in the rowboat, after shutting the slide of the cabin, leaving Vic entirely to himself.

"Now for action!" cried the boy, resolutely, sitting up on the bunk. "I've got about an hour to do something, and I guess I shan't need half of that time."

He slipped over to the slide and pulled it open a trifle.

Bender was in the act of lighting a fresh cigar, and seemed to be taking matters pretty easy in the morning sunshine.

"I'll give that bearded chap time enough to get away from dock," mused the boy, "then I'll work a surprise party on Mr. Bender. I can handle him easily enough, and I'll bet I'll have him in jail before he's many hours older. As for the chief conspirator, I'll have to let the police attend to him. I can't do everything single-handed. If I recover the company's property, and catch one of the criminals, I think I am doing pretty well under the circumstances."

While waiting for the moment to act aggressively, Vic took the key from his shoe and unlocked the brass-bound box.

He wanted to make sure that the money, as well as the bonds, was still in the box.

He found that it was, and then decided to remove it, stowing the bills away in the inner pockets of his jacket, lest anything should happen to go wrong with his plan of operations. was safe to get busy.

His first idea was to fling back the slide suddenly, rush out and overpower Bender in the cockpit.

He did not question his ability to do this successfully, but he was afraid the act would attract notice, and his scheme was avoid such a thing, if possible.

"Strategy is always a winner," he said to himself, thinking how artfully he had fooled the head rascal into the belief that he had swallowed the drugged coffee and was, for a while, dead to the world. "If I can only get him to enter the cabin I'll have him dead to rights. Now, how can I manage it?"

He peered out at the man as he lay sprawled off in the sunshine, smoking his cigar,

Bender hadn't had any sleep the preceding night, and he looked heavy about the eyes.

This fact attracted Vic's notice.

"That chap looks half asleep," said Vic to himself. "I'm going to attract his attention and see how it works."

He grabbed a blanket from the bunk, picked up the tin can and threw it against the roof of the cabin, and then crouched down in a corner near the sliding door.

The can made a great racket when it fell back on the floor and rolled about.

The ruse produced the desired effect.

Bender jumped up, opened the slide and looked in to see what had made the noise.

This was what Vic was waiting for.

He rose up suddenly, enveloped the man's head in the blanket and yanked him bodily into the cabin.

Then he sat upon him and proceeded to stifle him into insensibility with the folds of the blanket.

Bender struggled as well as he could under the disadvan-

tageous circumstances in which he was placed, but the advantage was all with the boy, who could not be dislodged.

The result was that the engraver soon succumbed and lay quite still.

Vic lifted the ends of the blanket slowly and cautiously.

The man was unconscious.

"I'll treat you to a dose of the same medicine you helped to deal out to me," said Vic, proceeding to bind Bender's arms securely behind his back, and then to gag him with a handkerchief. "Now, you can take a good rest in that bunk. You look as though you needed it," he grinned, picking the man up and placing him in the bunk he himself had only lately vacated. "Now, I'll get the boat under way for Spuyten Duyvil Creek and Kingsbridge."

What Vic didn't know about sailing a catboat, or even a small yacht, wasn't worth mentioning.

It was one of his hobbies, and constant practice on the Harlem River, and sometimes on the Hudson, had made him an expert.

Having disposed of Bender to his satisfaction, Vic left the cabin and, throwing off his jacket, hauled up the boat's main-sail.

The anchor was light and he soon had it on board, and the boat headed up the Hudson under a smacking breeze which promised to bring her to her destination in a few hours.

At that hour in the morning the lower reach of the Hudson was covered with all sorts of craft—ferryboats, tugboats, lighters, sloops, schooners, and goodness knows what not in the way of boats—so that it required considerable skill for the boy to work his way through this maze of marine architecture.

He was equal to the ordeal, however, and gradually left the worst of it behind him.

When opposite Forty-second street, well out in the center of the river, he observed a piece of wood floating toward him.

As he steered, so as to avoid contact with it, he saw a brilliant sparkle of light flashing from the center of it.

"I wonder what that can be?" he asked himself.

He guided the boat close to the bit of log and threw her up into the wind, stopping her progress.

The log floated alongside.

Vic reached over and picked up a lady's pocketbook, to which was attached a handsome diamond ring with a large stone.

"Gee whiz!" he exclaimed. "This is a find for fair."

He put the catboat on her course again, and then proceeded to examine the ring and pocketbook.

The former seemed to be of considerable value, though Vic had not the slightest idea what it was really worth.

The pocketbook contained a hundred-dollar bill and some smaller notes, amounting, in all, to \$124.

There were also a number of newspaper clippings, an eye-glass with gold settings and a variety of odds and ends, but not the slightest clew to the name or identity of the owner, other than a pair of initials on the flap—J. B.

"Funny how this purse and ring came to be floating down the river on an old log. It's a wonder it wasn't dumped overboard. Seems as if it was intended that I should find it. The owner shall have them back if I ever can locate her, otherwise I suppose they become my property."

Shortly after noon Vic passed under the railroad bridge at Spuyten Duyvil, and headed up the creek in the direction of Kingsbridge.

CHAPTER X.

VIC ASTONISHES THE PRESIDENT OF THE DUPLEX MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

It was about one o'clock when Vic hauled up alongside one of the landings in the neighborhood of Kingsbridge.

He saw several young lads playing near the creek, one of whom he knew, and he sent him over to Widow Tarbox's cottage, to inform her that he had got back, and to ask Johnny, if he was around, to bring his cart down to the landing.

In fifteen minutes Johnny came prancing down to the creek with his cart.

"Hello, Vic!" he shouted. "Where did dose men take you off to?"

"I'll tell you all about it later on. I've got one of them in this catboat now, and I want you to run to the police station and fetch a cop back with you to take charge of him."

"I'll do dat, Vic. Where did you get dat boat?"

"Don't ask questions, Johnny, but run along. I'm waiting."

The Tarbox you-ter started off at once.

In a short time he returned with an officer.

Vic told the policeman the character of the man he had in the cabin.

"You must come to the station and make a charge against him," said the officer.

"You take him along, and the Duplex Manufacturing Company will make the charge."

The policeman said that the sergeant wouldn't hold the man unless a definite charge was made when he was brought to the station.

"All right, officer. I'll go with you. I've got the evidence of his crime in a brass-bound box aboard the boat. I want you to give me a lift with it."

The policeman consented to help Vic carry the box ashore and place it in Johnny's cart.

Then he went back and got his prisoner, who was now fully conscious.

The procession took up its line of march for the station, accompanied by a number of idle and curious people, in addition to all the boys in the vicinity.

At the station Vic charged the prisoner with the crime of forgery—that is, the reproduction of facsimile plates, and printing from same a certain number of duplicate copies of the first mortgage bonds, Series A, of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, with intent to defraud both the company and the public.

"This man," said Vic, "is not the chief offender in this crime, but he is just as guilty as his principal, who is still at large. The genuine bonds of the Duplex Company are in that box, which I turn over to your charge, sergeant. So, also, are the spurious plates. The forged bonds are in the company's safe."

The prisoner had no statement to make, so his pedigree was taken, and he was locked up in a cell.

Vic sent Johnny home and started for the plant of the Duplex Company, where he was employed as shipping clerk.

He went direct to the offices, and asked if he could see President Harley Sherwood.

Being asked to mention the nature of his business with the head of the company, he stated that it was a matter of the utmost importance.

After some delay he was admitted to the president's office.

That gentleman looked very much worried.

He was, at that moment, investigating the disappearance of the envelope containing the \$50,000 which he had placed in the office safe the previous afternoon, and he was not pleased to be disturbed, especially by one of the minor employees of the company.

"What do you wish to see me about, young man?" he asked, a bit sharply.

"Two matters of great importance, sir," replied Vic, eagerly.

"Name them, and make your communication as brief as possible."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, respectfully. "I wish to know, in the first place, if you have missed a large sum of money from your safe?"

President Sherwood sat back in his chair and stared at the boy in considerable surprise.

"Why do you ask that question?" he inquired, with a keen glance at Vic.

"Because I have good reason to believe that the sum of \$50,000 was taken from the office safe late yesterday afternoon, or, maybe, early in the evening, sir."

"What has led you to form that belief?"

"A conversation that I overheard in the cellar of the old mill on the creek road last evening between two men, one of whom now is in the Kingsbridge police station on a very serious charge which I have brought against him."

"Indeed," replied Mr. Sherwood, knitting his brows. "May I ask you what you were doing in that deserted building last night?"

"I took refuge there with a young friend of mine named Johnny Tarbox, from the thunder-storm."

"I see. How came you to overhear the conversation which, I should imagine, was not intended for your ears?" asked Mr. Sherwood, with some interest.

"I think you will understand the matter better if I begin at the beginning and tell you all I have been through and discovered. I think you will find that it affects this company to a very serious extent."

"It certainly affects us to the extent of \$50,000," answered the president.

"It concerns the company much more than that, sir," said

"Then I'm out of it," replied the boy, disappointedly.

"Not necessarily. If you mean business, you can apply to the proper court for a guardian to be appointed to carry this thing through for you. I would suggest some good trust company. If you wish me to look into this matter for you I will do so."

"Thank you, Mr. Brown. I wish you would. But it must be done right away, or I shall lose the chance of getting hold of that property."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go and look the property over, and if I think it is a bargain I'll secure a thirty-day option on it for you. Then I'll go before the court and make application to have a certain trust company which I can recommend to you appointed your guardian. I can have the matter rushed through, and within the time-limit you will become the owner of the property."

"I'll be much obliged to you, sir, if you will do this for me," replied Vic, in a tone that showed he meant business.

Mr. Brown was as good as his word.

He found that the widow of the man who had owned the property had, as sole executrix of his will, made application to the probate court for permission to sell the property in question.

She was willing to sell the property lower than its actual value, if she could get \$12,000 spot cash right away.

Mr. Brown found, on investigation, that the property ought to be worth all of \$16,000, so he decided to take an option of thirty days, pending examination of title.

He reported the facts to Vic, and the boy drew \$1,000 from a Yonkers savings bank to make good the option.

Mr. Brown then lost no time in making application for a guardian for Vic.

In two weeks a judge signed the necessary order appointing the Title Guarantee & Trust Company Vic's guardian, and the trust company, in anticipation of the order, had, in the meantime, been having its lawyers search the title of the property it was to purchase for its ward.

When the thirty days expired, the trust company took title for Vic, itself advancing the \$7,000 balance and taking a mortgage therefor on the property.

The deed had hardly been signed before the company received an offer of \$15,000 for the property, which was subsequently increased to \$17,000.

Vic, however, on being consulted, refused to sell at that figure.

"It's worth as much to me as to any one else," he remarked to Mr. Brown one day. "The trust company has a tenant ready to take it as soon as certain repairs are made, and the property promises to yield six per cent. on \$18,000. So, you see, my judgment in this case wasn't so bad. I have really doubled my capital in this deal, besides having the prospect of clearing six per cent. on \$11,000 and one per cent. on the \$7,000 mortgage for which the trust company is charging me five per cent. For this good luck I am indebted to you interesting yourself in my affairs, Mr. Brown, and I am very grateful to you. You are certainly helping me to make my mark."

"Don't mention it, Vic. I have merely done for you what you couldn't do yourself. I am glad of the chance to help a bright boy like you have proved yourself to be."

"Well," mused Vic that night when he was preparing for bed, "if I don't make my mark so plain that it can't be rubbed out, it won't be for want of trying."

CHAPTER XIII.

VIC PERFORMS A GALLANT ACTION.

The advertisement which Mr. Brown had inserted in the Herald and other papers, in the "Lost and Found" column, having reference to the pocketbook and ring Vic found floating on the Hudson River, was productive of no results, although the notice was repeated several times.

"What shall we do about them, Mr. Brown?" Vic asked, one morning. "Advertising is expensive, and it doesn't do any good, as far as I can see."

"I don't know that we can do any better than to keep on advertising. There is money enough in the pocketbook to repay you for considerable outlay in that direction," replied the manager.

"All right," answered the boy. "I'm willing to be guided by whatever you say, sir."

The next day was Saturday, and the last half-holiday of the

season for the employees of the Duplex Manufacturing Company.

Vic went down to the Yacht and Boat Club, on the Harlem River, peeled off his clothes and arrayed himself in the light and airy costume adopted by the members when they went out for an afternoon spin in a shell.

Then he and another member grabbed one of the light boats, carried it out of the building and deposited it in the water.

There is a knack, of course, in getting into a shell in a graceful and apparently careless manner.

Vic and his companion were adepts at this, acquired by long practise.

They started off up the river at a swinging pace that sent the shell spinning along like a gull skimming the water.

It was a lovely afternoon, and the two boys were overflowing with health and spirits.

They had gone a mile when they saw a good-sized launch approaching at a swift rate.

Between them and the launch was a small rowboat, pulled by a coatless gentleman.

He had two passengers—a middle-aged lady, who sat facing him, and a young girl who sat in the stern sheets, steering the boat.

The gentleman's back was toward the approaching launch.

Vic and his companion had stopped for a breathing spell, and both turned to look in the direction their shell was gliding now at reduced speed.

At that moment, when the launch was close upon the rowboat, the young girl at the helm became confused and pulled the wrong rope.

The gentleman was pulling a lusty stroke at the time, and the consequence was the boat shot suddenly across the course of the launch.

It was impossible to stop the latter in time to avoid a collision.

She struck the boat just ahead of the rower and passed on with her power cut off, the helmsman trying to bring her around in a circle.

The bow of the rowboat was cut off as by a knife, and she sank at once, leaving her passengers in the water.

The women screamed, and the young girl went down like a stone.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Vic. "That girl will be drowned. Pull like fun!"

They pulled like good fellows, and presently Vic saw the girl come to the surface close by, wave her arms wildly and sink again.

In a moment he was on his feet, and, dropping his oars, he dived to her rescue.

The red sash on her white dress guided him to her, and he grabbed her a yard under the water.

Kicking out, he rose to the surface with his now almost unconscious burden.

The gentleman was supporting the lady and trying to keep afloat until the launch got near enough to take them aboard.

Vic was like a duck in the water, and it was no difficulty for him to hold the girl out of further peril till the launch picked up the other two, and then came toward them.

The girl was lifted on board the launch, which waited a moment until the boy resumed his seat in the shell, none the worse for his ducking, then it darted off down the river.

Two hours later, when Vic and his companion arrived at the club-house, an attendant asked if one of them hadn't saved a young lady from drowning up the river.

"Well, I went overboard after a young girl that was spilled out of a rowboat in a collision with a launch. What about it?"

"The party was landed here by the launch. It was Mr. Saunders, his wife, and niece, Miss Butterick. They were using one of our boats. They went home in their automobile, and Mr. Saunders left this note for the person who rescued Miss Butterick"—and the man handed Vic an envelope with the club's stamp on it.

Vic opened and read it.

It was a brief note of thanks for the service rendered to the writer's niece, and a pressing invitation to the unknown rescuer to call at Saunders' home at his earliest convenience.

Vic knew that Mr. Saunders was one of the directors of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, and a man of wealth and of some influence in the Kingsbridge district.

"Well," asked his companion, curiously, "what does he say?"

"Read it for yourself," replied Vic, handing him the note.

"Of course you'll call," said the other, after reading the

note. "Saunders is a big-bug in this locality. It's well worth while making a friend of him."

"I'll think about it," answered Vic, who was thinking about the lovely miss he had been so fortunate as to save from a possible watery grave.

"You don't want to think about it," said his friend. "You want to call right away. If I was in your shoes I'd go there to-night."

"What's the use of rushing things?" laughed Vic. "Won't to-morrow do as well?"

"I wouldn't leave it later than to-morrow. That was a pretty girl you saved, and 'most any fellow would be just crazy to improve the opportunity to make himself solid with her."

Vic did not make any reply to that speech.

In his heart he was anxious to make Miss Butterick's acquaintance, but he did not want his companion to guess his feelings on the subject.

So he changed the topic, and soon afterward they left the club-house for their homes.

On the following afternoon Vic dressed himself with extra care, and set out for the Saunders home.

It was a fine mansion, surrounded by spacious, velvety lawns, about a mile from the Tarbox cottage.

When he reached the front gate, where a graveled walk led up to the broad piazza, Vic's courage failed him and he kept on down the road at express speed, as though hurrying for a doctor.

After walking two blocks he came to a pause.

"What a chump I'm making of myself," he muttered. "What am I afraid of?"

So he turned about and went back.

When he came to the gate again, and noticed the flutter of a white dress on the piazza, he got another attack of stage fright, and sailed on two blocks the other way before he realized what he was doing.

Then he metaphorically kicked himself, turned around and retraced his steps.

For the third time he charged down on the gate, and would probably have continued on again but that he saw Mr. Sherwood, president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, coming up the road toward him.

"Good-afternoon, Bell," he said, laying his hand on the Saunders gate, as though he were about to enter the grounds, "are you out for a stroll?"

"Well, sir, I was just about to call on Mr. Saunders," replied Vic, desperately.

"Indeed! I was not aware you were acquainted with him."

"I'm not, sir; but the fact of the matter is he, his wife, and niece were out on the Harlem River yesterday afternoon and met with an accident. I was fortunate enough to render them a service, and Mr. Saunders left a note at the rowing club for me to call on him. If you are going to call on them, perhaps you will not mind introducing me. I'm almost afraid to venture in alone, sir."

"Oh, I see how it is," laughed Mr. Sherwood. "Come right along with me, and I will see you through."

He linked his arm in Vic's, and together they passed through the gate.

Two minutes later the boy was being introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Saunders and Miss Jennie Butterick.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS JENNIE BUTTERICK.

Jennie Butterick was a pretty girl.

Vic had discovered that fact at their first meeting, while holding her up in the water, in a partly unconscious state, waiting for the launch to bear down on them and take her on board.

At that time, being drenched and limp, she naturally was not looking her best.

Now, however, arrayed in her best, and appearing serene and comfortable, she presented an altogether different picture.

Her age was fifteen, and she looked as bright as a dollar fresh from the mint.

Whatever may have been Miss Butterick's shortcomings, bashfulness was not one of them.

Vic hadn't exchanged a dozen words with her before he realized that the advantage was all on her side.

Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, after expressing their gratitude to Vic for the service he had rendered their niece, and hoping that they and the lad would become better acquainted, had turned him over to the young lady.

Most girls would have felt embarrassed in the presence of

a good-looking boy who had saved their life, and have found some difficulty in expressing their sentiments.

Not so Miss Butterick.

"I hope you understand, Mr. Bell," she said, in well-chosen words, at the same time stealing a glance at his face and mentally deciding that he was a handsome boy, "that I am very grateful to you for saving my life yesterday afternoon."

"That's all right, Miss Butterick," replied Vic, cheerfully. "I am very glad I happened to be at hand to help you out of your scrape."

"I might have been drowned but that you bravely came to my rescue," she continued, with another sly look.

"You might, that is true, for the Harlem River has no respect even for a pretty girl when she falls overboard and cannot swim."

The implied compliment in Vic's words stirred up the saucy side of the girl's nature.

"Isn't it ridiculous that I should become the heroine of such a misadventure? I have often read of similar affairs in novels, but, really, I never thought it would fall to my lot to be saved from a watery grave by a good-looking young man."

Vic was somewhat taken aback by her words, for he could not decide whether her remarks were intended as a compliment, or whether she was making fun at him.

He cast a single, furtive glance at her, but without solving the problem.

As he did not exactly know how to make a suitable reply, he kept silent.

"I suppose," she continued, after a brief pause, "that you have been longing, for years, for an opportunity to rescue some unfortunate young lady from a watery grave, or from a runaway horse, or some such ridiculous situation? Your patience has at last been rewarded, and I am the victim."

Vic was sure now she was making sport of him, and the idea nettled him.

"No, Miss Butterick," he replied, coolly. "I assure you, not being in the habit of reading novels, I have not given the subject any thought. If you feel that fate has treated you unkindly in giving me the chance to pull you out of an unpleasant situation, it will give me great pleasure to try and correct the mistake."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked the pretty miss, staring hard at the speaker, as if she didn't grasp the meaning of his words.

"I mean, Miss Butterick," replied Vic, with a slight grin, "that having been so unfortunate as to save you—in your own language—from a watery grave, I am ready to repair my blunder."

"Repair your blunder!" gasped the girl, in bewilderment.

"Exactly. If you will permit me the pleasure, I will take you out in a boat this very afternoon, or next Saturday if you prefer, and drop you overboard in nearly the exact spot I found you yesterday. I can't offer to do a fairer thing than that, can I?"

"Well!" exclaimed the girl, almost paralyzed at his cool proposal, though she understood that he was merely getting back at her for her sauciness, "you are certainly the most remarkable young man I ever have met!"

"Am I to take that as a compliment?" he grinned. Or——"

"As a compliment, by all means," she replied. "So you are sorry, after all, that you rescued me from——"

"A watery grave," he interrupted. "Oh, no; it was you who seemed to regret the fact that fate had made you a victim. As far as I was concerned, that fate had honored me in selecting me as the instrument to rescue an exceedingly pretty girl."

"Really," replied Miss Butterick, with a vivid blush. "You said that very nice, indeed. Your language would lead me to believe that you carry a small edition of the Standard Dictionary around in your pocket for consultation as occasion requires."

"I have no doubt that a dictionary is an excellent book to have within reach at all times, Miss Butterick," replied Vic, politely; "but, all the same, I do not possess a portable edition. Probably that is where you have the advantage of me."

The young lady was beginning to realize that she was getting back as good as she gave, and it was rather a new sensation for her.

She did not mean to give up the battle, however, for she was a plucky girl.

"I presume you think you are an uncommonly smart young man," she said, saucily. "It was you, wasn't it, who saved

the Duplex Manufacturing Company from a heavy financial loss some weeks ago? Strange that I didn't recall the fact until this moment. I now wish to apologize for saying that I thought fate had treated me unkindly in making me a victim yesterday afternoon. I have decided that I ought to be truly thankful that the opportunity was mine to have been rescued from a perilous situation by the smartest young man in Kingsbridge."

"Thank you, Miss Butterick," grinned Vic, who had now lost all his reserve in the presence of the prettiest girl in the neighborhood. "You can say some very nice things yourself when you've the mind to."

"I hope you understand how highly I appreciate the honor which has been conferred on me," she replied, demurely. "I remember now that I have been just dying to make your acquaintance ever since papa spoke about your brilliant feat of saving the money and the bonds of the company, and actually capturing one of the men all by yourself. Do you know, I think you are quite a prodigy."

Vic grinned.

"Don't you think you are a prodigy?" she persisted, with a winsome glance.

"I haven't thought about the matter at all, Miss Butterick."

"Haven't you? What a modest young man you are," she retorted.

"We all have our failings," he snickered.

"Certainly, bashfulness isn't one of them," she retorted.

"I couldn't be bashful in the presence of such a witty and lovely—"

"Come, now, Mr. Bell," she protested, with a rosy blush. "I think it's time to change the subject, don't you?"

"I agree with you, Miss Butterick."

"Then I'll tell you a most remarkable incident that happened to auntie and I up the river some weeks since," she continued, vivaciously. "You see, we were spending the summer at West Point. One day auntie and I went down to the landing to meet some friends we expected by the Albany day boat. They did not come; and, after the boat went on her way, we walked some little distance down the river, and finally sat down to rest on a log close to the water's edge. I took from my finger a valuable diamond ring that belonged to my mother, and attached it to the rubber band around my pocketbook, laying the wallet beside me on the log."

At this point Vic grew uncommonly interested in her story.

"The reason I did this was because I saw what I took to be a very curious shell sticking out of the bank about a foot under the surface of the river, and I wanted to get it without wetting the ring. I got the shell, and it was a very interesting specimen. Collecting shells is a hobby of mine. I have a cabinet full of them, and it will give me great pleasure to show them to you when we go into the house. The shell took up my attention so much that when auntie and I rose to leave the spot I forgot all about the ring and the pocketbook."

"And the log got loose and floated off down the river with your property," said Vic, in some little excitement.

"Why, yes; that is just what it did do," she answered, in surprise. "How did you guess?"

"Oh, that was easy. Go on and tell me the rest."

"We had walked up the bank beyond the railroad some little distance before I missed my ring and pocketbook. Then I remembered the circumstances of the case and rushed back to get them. To my dismay I saw the log floating off quite a distance from the shore. I was greatly distressed. There was over \$100 in money in my wallet, though I did not care so much for that as I did for my ring, which was priceless to me, because it came to me from my mother when she died." And Vic saw the girl's handsome eyes fill with tears.

"What did you do to try to recover it?" he asked.

"I couldn't do anything. There wasn't a man nor a boat in sight. We followed the river for nearly a mile, when we were blocked by a rocky projection behind which my lovely ring and wallet vanished, and I have never heard of them since."

"It was a great loss to you, wasn't it?" said Vic.

"I could hardly have suffered a more severe one!" she replied.

"Now, what would you give to have that ring and pocketbook come back to you in the same condition you lost them?"

"What would I give?" she exclaimed. "Everything I possess in this world!" she cried, earnestly. "But they never will! Uncle has advertised a reward of \$1,000 for them."

but I'm afraid they lie at the bottom of the river!" she concluded, mournfully.

"Don't be so sure of that, Miss Butterick," said Vic, with sparkling eyes. "Do you know that I am something of a magician?"

"A magician!" she ejaculated, wonderingly.

"Yes. I have the ability sometimes to recover lost property."

"You are joking, aren't you?" she said, looking him straight in the face.

"Not in this instance. Now, Miss Butterick, some day I might want you to bestow a favor on me. Will you promise to do it, or at least consider the matter favorably, if I put on my magical cap, and whistle back your ring and pocketbook?" he asked, eagerly.

"Why, Mr. Bell, how could you do such a thing as that?" she asked, in astonishment.

"Don't you worry about how I'm going to do it, so long as you get your property back. Is it a bargain between us?"

"I'd promise anything to get my ring back," she cried; "but I know that is quite out of the question."

"We'll see if it is. Just imagine that I am in a trance now, please."

"In a trance! Why, you foolish boy—"

"Hush!" whispered Vic, mysteriously, as he closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair. "Answer my questions. Describe the pocketbook, please."

Miss Butterick described it, and its contents exactly.

"I see it!" exclaimed Vic, solemnly. "And the ring, too. They are not at the bottom of the river, but done up in a package that lies in the office safe of the Duplex Manufacturing Company."

"Mr. Bell!" cried the girl, quivering with excitement. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, Miss Butterick, that your ring and pocketbook are quite safe, and shall be returned to you to-morrow. I found them myself floating down the Hudson on the identical log on which you placed them. They are, at this moment, in our office safe."

CHAPTER XV.

VIC'S SUCCESS IN THE REAL ESTATE FIELD.

Jennie Butterick uttered a scream of delight and clasped her hands together.

Her aunt, who, in company with her husband and Mr. Sherwood, was sitting a short distance away, looked around at her, wondering what had occasioned her excitement.

"Oh, auntie, what do you think?" the girl called out to her. "Mr. Bell found my diamond ring and pocketbook floating down the Hudson on that log."

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Mrs. Saunders, rising and coming over to them.

"Yes," answered Vic. "I'll tell you how it happened."

And he explained how the incident transpired on the morning he was returning from the Battery to Kingsbridge in the catboat with his prisoner and the company's property on board.

"I never would have paid any attention to that log but for the flashing of the sun's rays from the diamond," he said. "Mr. Brown, our manager, advertised the articles several times in the Herald and World, but no one put in a claim for them."

"I never thought of looking in the papers for such an advertisement," replied the girl. "I gave them up; for I thought they had fallen off the log into the river."

"Well," laughed Vic, "you see that I am something of a magician, after all."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for recovering my ring especially," Miss Butterick said, earnestly. "And, on top of that, you saved my life. I certainly will never forget you as long as I live."

"Then you are willing to admit that I did not do wrong in jumping overboard after you yesterday," chuckled the boy.

"Why, of course you didn't. If you hadn't done it, I should have been drowned!"

"I am to understand, then, that you do not wish me to alter matters by taking you out in a boat and—"

"Now, aren't you just too horrid for anything!" she pouted.

"All right. We'll let it stand as it is," he laughed.

"Auntie, you must tell uncle to give Mr. Bell the reward he offered for my ring and pocketbook."

"Don't do anything of the kind, Mrs. Saunders!" cried Vic, quickly.

"Why not, Mr. Bell?" asked the girl. "Uncle is my guardian, and I can easily afford a thousand dollars for such a service, without considering the matter of my life, which is something I would not think of offering you pay for."

"I think we made a bargain about that ring and pocketbook. You promised to grant me a small favor some day if I should ask it of you. That covers the whole business."

"Well, I certainly will grant you any favor you ever ask of me," she replied, energetically.

"Don't be rash, Miss Butterick," smiled Vic. "You might want to draw out at the critical moment."

"No, I won't. I never go back on my word."

"All right. I'll remember that."

"Come in and see my cabinet of shells," the pretty miss said, suddenly.

Vic accompanied her inside, and was much interested in her collection, which was both unique and valuable.

The boy was easily induced to remain to tea, and when he left he was pressed to call again soon.

Next day Jennie Butterick called at the Duplex establishment, and, at her own request, she was shown to the shipping-room, where she found Vic up to his eyes in business.

"This visit is quite an honor, Miss Butterick," said the boy, gallantly.

The girl smiled and blushed a little.

"I thought I'd look in to see what you were doing," she said.

Vic hastened to explain to her the mysteries of the shipping department, and showed her around the place.

He also took her into the engine room, and one or two other sections of the establishment, and she expressed herself very much entertained by what she saw.

Then Vic took her to the manager's office and introduced her to Mr. Brown.

"Mr. Brown, this is the owner of the ring and pocketbook which you deposited in the office safe. Will you kindly get them for her?"

The manager said he would, and they were soon in her hands.

"I have a little bill of advertising against you," he said. "Or rather Vic has. He put up for it."

She settled the amount, and soon afterward left.

Late that afternoon a boy was shown into the shipping-room.

He handed Vic a small package, asking him to sign for it.

When our hero opened the packet he found an elegant gold watch and chain, and an enameled diamond-encrusted charm, together with a short note from Jennie Butterick, in which she expressed her gratitude all over again in writing, and begged him to accept the enclosed articles as a slight testimonial of her appreciation of what she owed him.

Of course Vic accepted the present, and wrote the pretty miss a letter of acknowledgment and thanks.

After that Vic became a regular caller at the Saunders home, and it was understood that Jennie Butterick was the magnet which drew him there.

One afternoon Mr. Ralph Roundtree, the vice-president of the company, walked into the shipping-room to look around.

Vic had seen him once or twice before, though not for some weeks.

He was a fine-looking, stalwart man, with a black mustache and piercing black eyes.

He walked about the room, examining the system Vic used for sending off the goods.

Finally he stopped before the boy, and asked him a trivial question.

At the sound of his voice Vic looked at him sharply before he made any reply.

"Ah," he thought, "now I know whose voice it was that the masked man's resembled. Mr. Roundtree has just his figure, too. It's a wonder the detectives were never successful in rounding the rascal up."

Then he answered the vice-president's question politely.

After that he furtively watched Mr. Roundtree while he remained in the shipping department, and the longer he looked at him the more the gentleman reminded him of the rascal who had engineered the scheme for defrauding the company out of \$150,000 worth of bonds, besides stealing \$50,000 outright from the office safe.

Of course it was preposterous to even think that Mr. Roundtree had any connection with such a piece of crooked business, so Vic dismissed the matter from his mind.

A whole year passed away, and summer came around once more.

The Duplex Manufacturing Company had grown in importance, and Vic's wages had been raised to \$18 per week.

It was about this time that he ran across a great bargain in real estate.

The trust company that acted as guardian for the boy had received an offer of \$20,000 for his property, and wrote to him advising him by all means to accept it.

Vic wrote back that they could sell it for him.

The day that he did so his attention was accidentally called to a tract of land which some speculators were negotiating for.

They were anxious to buy the land, but were dickering over the price, which was really dirt cheap, and they knew it.

Just the same they were hoggish in the matter, because they thought they had the inside track.

Vic went and looked the property over, and then offered the owner his price.

"Whom do you represent?" asked the man, eager to close the deal.

"How does the Title Guarantee & Trust Company strike you?" asked Vic.

"They're good enough for anybody," said the man.

"All right," replied the boy. "I'll give you a note to the president. Take it down to their offices on Broadway tomorrow morning and the company will make arrangements with you."

Vic wrote a letter telling the company that he wanted to invest the proceeds of the sale of his present property in the new deal, which involved a matter of \$35,000.

He wanted the company to advance him the amount necessary to secure an option on the new property, while they investigated the title, and closed out his other realty.

His \$13,000 interest in his present property was security enough for the company to comply with his wishes, and the new deal was arranged.

When the speculators found out that they were dished out of the land they had intended to cut up into building lots, improve and sell at a good price, they were madder than hornets.

But they couldn't do a thing, except make a higher offer to the trust company, which was refused.

In due time Vic sold his first real estate investment and became owner of the \$35,000 plot of land, on which the trust company advanced the necessary \$22,000 on a first mortgage.

This deal was purely speculative in character, as there was no income from it, and Vic had \$550 semi-annual interest to face, besides taxes and possible assessments.

Jennie Butterick promised to see him through the deal if necessary, though he had no intention of calling on her to do so, if he could help it.

He understood that the trust company would carry him.

His plan was to hold the land a year or so, by which time he expected all property in that neighborhood would make a big advance.

Before long he got an offer of \$42,000 for it, which showed him that he had made no mistake in buying it.

Taking the above figures as a fair indication of its present value, he allowed that his \$5,000 check from the company had, in one year, increased to \$20,000 through shrewd judgment in realty values.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

As Jennie Butterick had taken Vic under her wing, so to speak, he had entry into the best society of upper New York.

She wouldn't have anybody else for an escort when she could get Vic to accompany her.

Everybody said they made a very handsome couple, and not a few wise ones predicted a marriage in the future, in which they would figure as the principals.

When the Christmas holidays came around again, Vic had passed his eighteenth birthday by a lap, while Jennie had arrived at sweet sixteen.

Vic still boarded at the humble cottage of Mrs. Tarbox.

She was as good as a mother to him, and the boy wouldn't have shaken her for the world.

He was invited to eat his Christmas dinner with the family.

derses and Miss Jennie, and he wouldn't have missed it for a farin.

Jennie had come to exercise a sort of proprietorship over him, and he enjoyed the sensation.

"I have an invitation to attend a masquerade ball at Mr. Sherwood's on New Year's night," she remarked to Vic on Christmas evening after dinner.

The pair were sitting by themselves in the conservatory of the mansion, and the gas was turned down quite low.

"Have you?" answered Vic, thinking that his fair companion had never looked quite so pretty as she did that evening.

"Yes. Of course you're going with me," she said, in that decided tone she always addressed him, as if what she said went every time.

"You seem to take the matter for granted, Jennie," he answered, smilingly.

They always called each other Jennie and Vic now.

"Certainly I do," she answered, with a little wilful shake of her head.

"Haven't I got anything to say in the matter?" he asked.

"Well, I'll permit you to say—yes."

"Thank you; you're getting liberal. Now, do you know, I've been thinking of asserting my independence," he said, quizzically.

"I have no objection to you being as independent as you wish, as long as you do everything I ask," she laughed.

"Come, now, I like that," he protested.

"I am very glad, indeed, that you like it."

"I like something better than that, though," he said, getting an inch closer to her.

"What is that?"

"Why, you, of course."

Jennie blushed and was silent.

"Do you know, Jennie, I've been thinking of realizing on some of my investments."

"Are you thinking of selling your land at this time?" she asked, in surprise.

"No. I mean my other investment."

"What is it?"

"That promise you made me a year and a half ago when I whistled back your ring and pocketbook that you thought were lost for good."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, somewhat wonderingly.

"Are you prepared to redeem that promise now?"

"What was it?"

"You promised to grant any little request I might ask you in the future. Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes. Have you a request you want me to grant? If you have, consider it granted," she said, with a smile.

"Don't get reckless, Jennie. Better wait and hear what it is first."

"I'm listening."

"Jennie," he continued, earnestly, "you and I are good friends, but I am always worrying about how long it may be before you'll find somebody else that you will learn to like better than me. I hope you won't get angry with me for saying that the whole world is nothing to me beside you. I have learned to love you with all my heart. I want to prove worthy of winning you some day for my wife. Perhaps I oughtn't to talk this way to you, because of the difference in our social standing, and because we are both rather young to consider so serious a subject. But I cannot help it, Jennie. I must know whether you really care for me as I care for you. The request I make of you, and I do not insist on you keeping your promise to grant it, is that you tell me frankly if there is any hope for me to look forward to the realization of my fondest dream—that of winning your love and your hand eventually. That is all I have to say. I have opened my heart to you. If I have offended you I shall regret it, but I could not have acted otherwise."

Jennie's color came and went, and her bosom rose and fell with the emotion she was experiencing.

"What do you wish me to say?" she asked at length, in a low tone.

"Is there any hope for me to expect that some day you will become my wife?" he asked, with quivering lips, for the stake he was playing for was high.

"Yes," she whispered, and then she let her head drop on his shoulder.

They went to the masquerade ball together in the Saunders automobile on New Year's night.

There was a big crowd present at the Sherwood mansion.

Every one was expected to be masked during the first part of the evening, and many were there in fantastic costumes.

Vic had just finished a waltz with Jennie, who was dressed to represent Little Red Ridinghood, and he was leading her back to her seat when he came face to face with a masked man, who also wore a heavy brown beard.

The boy gazed in bewilderment at the man, for he was the counterpart of the masked forger of months before.

"What's the matter, Vic?" asked Jennie.

"Nothing," he answered quickly, leading her to her seat.

Then, excusing himself, he hurried off to find Mr. Sherwood.

After some difficulty he located that gentleman, and told him what he had seen.

"You must be mistaken in your idea that that is the mask you saw on the rascal who put the forgery almost through. No one is present here to-night but those I should be able to identify as upright people if their masks were removed. My guests are all my personal friends."

"All right, sir," replied Vic, respectfully. "You ought to know; but how can you determine that it was not a close friend of yours who engineered that forgery? The man has never been caught. Who could have had access to your vaults and safe but a man who knew the ins and outs of the Duplex Company's offices? Who would have undertaken such a scheme, with prospects of success, but a man closely identified with the business of the company? With your permission I am going to find out the identity of this man who wears the suspicious mask."

"You may do so, of course, but be careful how you manage it, Bell. I cannot have one of my guests offended."

Mr. Sherwood walked off, leaving Vic to consider how he was going to accomplish his purpose.

As he turned away he ran into a small man in a dress-suit and a purple mask.

The mask became dislodged, and Vic recognized the Pinkerton detective.

"I'd like to talk with you, Mr. Hawkshaw," said the boy.

They went downstairs to the deserted dining-room, where Vic took off his mask, so the detective could identify him, and then told him his suspicions.

"All right. You have furnished me with the clew I have wanted. Who do you suppose that gentleman is?"

"I think I can guess, Mr. Hawkshaw. It is Mr. Roundtree, vice-president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company."

"You are right. I have long suspected him to be the 'man behind' the forgery. Now I am sure of it. In his fancied security, he is wearing to-night the identical mask he wore when you were up against him. Also the same beard. It was a fool's trick, but there is always a time in a man's life when he makes a grievous mistake. Roundtree has made his, and it shall land him in Sing Sing."

An hour later a telegram was delivered to Ralph Roundtree summoning him to his home.

As he stepped out of his automobile at his door, the Pinkerton man, followed by Vic, stepped up and arrested him.

He was taken to the Tombs and locked up.

Next day Hawkshaw visited Sing Sing and had an interview with Adam Bender.

When the convict heard that Roundtree was in the Tombs he wilted and was induced to make a full confession.

At the trial of Roundtree, Bender was permitted to turn State's evidence, and his testimony, in addition to Vic's evidence, sent the vice-president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company to Sing Sing for ten years.

His wife felt the disgrace so keenly that she sold out everything and left the neighborhood.

Mr. Saunders, at Jennie's request, loaned Vic the funds necessary to purchase Roundtree's block of Duplex stock, and the boy found himself in line for the presidency of the company.

That was ten years ago, and to-day Victor Bell, the proud and handsome husband of Jennie Butterick, is president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, the biggest concern in its line of business in the United States.

Who, then, shall say that Victor Bell hasn't made his mark in life?

Next week's issue will contain "HEIR TO A MILLION; OR, THE BOY WHO WAS BORN LUCKY."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

O. N. West, the hay and grain wholesaler, had something more than he had ordered and paid for when he received a carload of hay in the Santa Fe yards, Pemeta, Okla. When he opened the door he found several bantam chickens just hatched out in a nest between two bales of hay. The mother displayed great disapproval at the disturbance. West presented the outfit to one of the "skinners" who appeared to haul the hay to the field.

Fifteen million dollars' worth of Christmas toys made in Germany, already shipped to the United States, have been intercepted by the British navy and are now held up in various British ports. These goods, always ordered long in advance, have been shipped within two months in various neutral steamers. Unless Great Britain's order in council is relaxed—of which there is little prospect—youthful America will never get the toys, or German makers their money.

The execution of two negroes, Peter Bolen and Dit Seals, was turned into a popular holiday at Starkville, Miss., 4,000 picnickers eating their lunches around the scaffold. So anxious was the crowd to witness the hanging that many arrived from the rural districts the day before. Many gifts of food were sent to the condemned men by white families. The hanging took place in a natural amphitheater outside the jail. Soda water and sandwich stands did a thriving business while the condemned were being brought to the gallows.

A stallion saved the life of Ethel Easterwood, the thirteen-year-old daughter of E. E. Easterwood, a cattleman, when she was attacked by a mountain lion, according to advices brought into Alpine, Texas, by B. F. Nichols, a neighboring rancher. The girl was riding on the range when the mountain lion leaped at a colt. The colt escaped, and the lion, seeing the girl and her mount, charged on them. A stallion coming out of the brush sprang upon the lion as it crouched to spring at the terrified girl. A fearful fight followed, and as the girl turned her horse for home the lion was in flight, with the stallion pursuing.

Charles Bays, aged fifty-one, walked into the police station at Vincennes, Ind., and asked whether he was wanted at Michigan City for violating his parole. Chief of Police Adams could find nothing in the records from Michigan City, but a telegram from Warden Fogarty stated that Bays was wanted and to hold him. Bays was sentenced to from one to eight years from Dubois County in 1910 for the theft of a half-gallon of whisky. He had served three years, but his term was lengthened when he failed to report while on parole.

The removal of an insect was asked for by H. Cook, a tailor, who went to the Emergency Hospital, Spokane, Wash., holding his left ear the other day. The bug entered at an open window while Cook rode in a street car,

and gave him much pain. Two drops of glycerine containing five per cent. carbolic acid was dropped into the ear by Steward A. H. Woodruff. Bugs have an antipathy for this solution, according to the experience of the steward in the tropics. As the second drop disappeared the bug stuck its green head forth cautiously, and was grabbed by the steward.

Jack Winings, of Montpelier, Ind., who is well known as race starter at county fairs in Indiana, is \$600 richer as a result of an act of kindness. Several years ago a man giving the name of Robert Harton drifted into Montpelier. He was friendless and without money. Winings took him in and gave him odd jobs about his store. This continued for several years. Harton died and his will was probated. He left \$600, his life's savings, to his benefactor. After his death it was learned that Harton was a steamboat captain on the Ohio River during Civil War days.

Mrs. David R. Hayden, of Worthington, Ind., is 105 years old. In a radius of comparatively few miles two other women live who are past 100. Mrs. Hayden never has used eyeglasses, her hearing is good, and until this year she spent much of her time in her garden. Across the county line in Sullivan County resides Mrs. Eleanor Combs, who was 105 last October. She has fifty-seven grandchildren, 147 great-grandchildren and seventeen great-great-grandchildren. Mrs. Nancy Tincher, at Linton, was 100 last December. She has lived in the Linton neighborhood since birth.

A report from Bucharest that orders had been issued to the Roumania officials at all frontier stations to make the most thorough examination of all freight cars owned by Austria-Hungary, Germany and Turkey to prevent the possibility of the passage through Roumanian territory of munitions and arms was officially confirmed at the Roumanian Legation in Paris. It is reported that carloads of beer barrels packed in ice sent from Germany to Turkey were examined and the barrels found to contain munitions. The freight cars are reported to have been provided with false bottoms and walls behind which arms were hidden.

Mrs. C. S. Elgin, of San Benito County, who is visiting in Sawtelle, Cal., with friends, has given her acquaintances an impetus to join the butterfly-catching brigade as an occupation that yields a harvest of gold for the little time devoted to it. She says that while wandering on a hillside near her home one morning she succeeded in capturing twenty perfect specimens of the Pergamus Swallowtail and received \$7 each for the females and \$4 for the males. The excursion proved so profitable that she has gone into the business. She says her method was to attract them at night by means of lights and sweetened bait. The nectar used was a combination of stale beer, rum and molasses. One taste of the tempting decoction calls for more.

JOLLY JACK JONES

—OR—

KNOCKING ABOUT THE WORLD

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXIII (continued)

Without stopping to ask any further questions, Jack hurried out of the summer house, picked up a good-sized stone, and threw it over the wall.

Immediately a low whistle was heard.

"Oh, Jack, he is there, and I am so glad!" Lena breathed, having come up behind him.

"Who?" demanded Jack.

"You remember Mr. Duff?"

"The detective?"

"Yes."

"Why, of course. It can't be——"

"But it is! Look, Jack! Look!"

"Gee! Somebody is coming over the wall!" Pat exclaimed.

"Hush! No noise!" whispered Lena. "Your lives depend upon keeping cool and quiet now!"

There was a man on top of the wall sure enough.

In the moonlight Jack saw to his amazement that it was Detective Duff, and no one else.

He made a hurried gesture to Lena, bent down and pulled up a ladder which he dropped over on their side of the wall.

He hurried down into the garden, and then another man appeared on the wall and followed him.

Another and another came over, until twenty had gathered in the garden.

At the head of this formidable force Detective Duff marched up to where Lena and the boys stood.

"Lena, you're a brave girl. Your hour of deliverance has come!" he whispered, and then he shook Jack's hand.

"Glad to see you again, Jack Jones," he whispered. "You are surprised to see me here, but I can't explain now. That will come later. This, I suppose, is Pat Trainor, the banjo king. I'm glad to know you. Some other time you shall play for me, and if you can play the banjo better than Jolly Jack Jones let me tell you that you can play mighty well. Lena, is the coast all clear?"

"There's only the two of them, besides Shellboyer," whispered Lena. "The bloodhound is loose, though."

"And Mr. Lozee—where is his room. We must rescue him first."

"Oh, I am so sorry, for you will be so disappointed," said Lena. "Mr. Lozee has escaped, and I'm afraid he is dead."

"Escaped? When? How?"

"This morning. I——"

"He is not dead!" broke in Jack. "I know where he is

and with the men at your back, Mr. Duff, you ought to be able to rescue him."

"You know, Jack?" cried Lena. "Oh, good."

"And then you are a liar, for you told me you didn't know," Pat put in.

"Speak up, Jack. Where is he?" demanded Detective Duff. "Details later, boy. Now you need only answer my question."

"He is held a prisoner by a lot of moonshiners in a place called the Devil's Punch Bowl," said Jack. "I can lead you to it if——"

"Good! You know the way into the Devil's Punch Bowl?"

"One way, if——"

"No if allowed! Listen. I am out here to rescue Martin Lozee, in which this brave girl, who I sent here as a detective, has been of the greatest assistance to me, the other to capture and break up a gang of moonshiners, led by a man known as Father Dan."

"The very gang."

"We have searched for them in vain. These men are all Secret Service detectives. We had just about come to the conclusion that we should have to give that part of the business up, but now, thanks to you, the tables are turned."

"Come, Mr. Duff," broke in Lena. "we must talk no more. If we are to capture Lawyer Shellboyer, now is our time."

"Capture him! Why, I'm here for nothing else!" cried Detective Duff. "Forward, boys! We will bag him right now. This is his finish, and once we have him safe, I shall telegraph Cleveland to have Madam Lozee taken into custody."

"This way," said Lena. "Follow me. Be ready for the dog!"

The detectives drew revolvers and started for the house. Jack and Pat walked on either side of Mr. Duff, who handed each a revolver.

For once the banjo king forgot his banjo. He had left it in the summer house and never thought of it now.

Lena led the way upstairs to the secret door.

"I haven't got the key now," she whispered. "I came in by a secret panel in the dining-room. You will have to break the door down."

"Then here goes!" said the detective. "Make a flying wedge, boys, and let her go!"

They put themselves in line, each with his hands on the others' shoulders.

Detective Duff was in advance. Lena stood back out of the way.

"Now!" breathed the detective.

They came against the door with fearful force.

The hinges were forced from the fastenings, and the door fell in with a crash.

"What in thunder is all this?" Bill Bluett's voice was the other's shoulders.

He came running along the hall.

A huge bloodhound, barking furiously, sprang in ahead of him.

Bang!

Detective Duff's revolver spoke.

The bloodhound with a wild yelp sprang into the air and fell down dead.

"Heavens! There's a hundred of them!" yelled Bill Bluett, and he dashed downstairs.

At the same instant a door was flung violently open.

There stood Lawyer Shellboyer in his shirt-tail with a revolver in his hand.

"Don't shoot!" cried Duff. "You have but one revolver; here are twenty-two. John Shellboyer, your race is run."

"I am inclined to think so myself," said the lawyer, hoarsely. "Who are you?"

"My name is Duff. I am a Secret Service detective. In the name of the law I arrest you on the charge of abducting Martin Lozee."

"I surrender to a superior force, gentlemen, but I deny everything. Find Martin Lozee if you can."

"Trust me for that!" exclaimed Detective Duff, springing forward and snapping a pair of handcuffs on the villain's wrists. "I've got proof enough to send you up for ten years!"

"Do your worst!" growled Shellboyer. "I defy you! Martin Lozee is a lunatic. I have acted by his wife's orders. You can do nothing to me."

"We'll see about that," chuckled the detective. "Lock him in the room, boys. Three of you stay here on guard. Now, Jack Jones, lead the way to the Devil's Punch Bowl, and we will soon rescue Mr. Lozee."

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

"Is this the place?"

"It is, as near as I remember it, Mr. Duff."

"Pity, we couldn't have caught that fellow, Bill Bluett. He would have been able to tell."

"It's the place fast enough if we are in the right valley; there are so many of them around here. That's the only point."

Jack had followed the course taken by himself and Mr. Lozee as closely as was possible by lantern and moonlight.

The Secret Service men were trailing down the brook, and the valley seemed never likely to come to an end, which made Detective Duff a bit nervous, and he began to question Jack a little sharper than was pleasant.

But the problem was solved a minute later.

"Here we are!" cried Jack.

They had come up against the wall of rock, and there, right ahead of them, was the narrow rift which we have called the cave.

"That's the place, Mr. Duff," said Jack.

"Good enough!" replied the detective, "and now, boys, the danger time has come. If there is a guard at the other end and we are to be shot, as Jack tells us the bloodhounds were shot, it will be anything but pleasant. I ask no man to follow me, but I am going to crawl right into that hole and take my chances of never coming back."

"I'll follow you, Mr. Duff!" cried Jack.

"Same here," put in Pat.

The Secret Service men were equally ready.

With Detective Duff in the lead, they crawled into the rift and worked their way on in the darkness, passing the bodies of the dead bloodhounds as they went.

"Question is now, can we move the stone?" breathed the detective.

He had reached the end of the cave.

Listening cautiously, no sound had been heard.

"Here goes for it," whispered Mr. Duff. "It's purely a question of elbow grease now."

He threw his whole weight against the stone.

It moved.

The detective was able to get his hands under it and raise it up.

A moment later he had rolled it over.

The stone struck the ground with a thud.

The decisive moment had come.

Now the guard would make his presence known if he was there.

Mr. Duff listened breathlessly, but there was no sound.

"Follow me, boys!" he whispered. "We have it all our own way, I do believe!"

One by one they passed out into the Devil's Punch Bowl.

There was no guard.

One reason for the neglect was soon to be made plain.

"Lead on, Jack Jones," said Mr. Duff. "It's up to you, now, to guide us to the stills."

"This way," said Jack. "Don't make too much noise about it, gentlemen, unless you want to get shot."

They glided along through the trees like so many cats.

In a few minutes they came in sight of the log huts.

Lights burned in Father Dan's hut, and also in the still room, but not a soul was to be seen.

"Now for a rush!" breathed Mr. Duff.

"Out with revolvers and ready, boys. Shoot 'em down if they make a show to shoot you."

The rush was on Father Dan's hut first.

The door was thrown open, and the detectives trooped in.

There lay half a dozen moonshiners, some on the floor, in the bunks, one on a table, another sprawled out on a chair.

This last was Father Dan himself, and he was the only one who roused.

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

STOPPED TO KILL RATTLER.

When Fireman George Dally, on a Sewell Valley railroad train, on which Bishop P. J. Donahue, of the Wheeling diocese, and other Catholic clergymen were passengers, saw a huge rattlesnake near Clutte, W. Va., he stopped the train and the members of the crew killed the reptile. It had eleven rattlers and a button.

MAIMED BIRD ON PILOT.

When the westbound Pendleton express of the O.-W. R. and N. pulled into the station at Hood River, Ore., a China pheasant cockerel with a broken leg was taken from the pilot. The bird had flown against the train just west of Hood River and managed to maintain a perch. It was turned over to Station Agency Fredricy.

FORTY ACRES OF BLACKBERRIES.

The largest patch of blackberries in the South is in Jefferson County, Ky., being forty acres. The owners began several years ago with four acres and have gradually increased to forty. One hundred pickers are required daily during the busy season. The berries grown in this section are regarded as superior to those grown in the West, which are big and soft, while these are firm and well colored.

SMALLEST PENKNIFE.

What is perhaps the smallest penknife in the world has been completed by M. A. Kaufman, employed in a jewelry store in Altoona, Pa. It measures 5-32 of an inch in length, with a blade less than 2-16 of an inch long and weighs a third of a grain. The handle is of solid gold, while the blade and spring are of tempered steel. The knife is kept in a glass bottle to prevent losing it. The workmanship must be seen through a magnifying glass.

ALL BORN ON HOLIDAYS.

At least three holidays have been eventful days for Mr. and Mrs. E. Lirette, of Marquette, Mich.

Mr. and Mrs. Lirette have three sons, Edwin, Raymond and Paul. Edwin came into the world one Christmas day and Raymond was born while the world was busy celebrating Fourth of July. Paul, the last born, made his bow to the world Feb. 12, Lincoln's birthday.

WILL IN HIS SLIPPER.

When Thomas H. Sestel, pioneer resident of Filmore Township, Hudsonville, Mich., died on May 30 there began a search for a will disposing of his estate, which is valued at upward of \$80,000.

A justice who drew up a will and the men who signed as witnesses testified to the existence of such a document, but a search failed to reveal the missing testament.

The estate was taken into Probate Court to be divided among the heirs according to their rights by birth.

As a probate judge was about to take this step one of

the dead man's great-granddaughters was busy aiding in giving the home of Mr. Sestel a thorough cleaning. She found an old pair of carpet slippers, frayed and torn. As she threw the slippers away a piece of paper fell out. It proved to be the missing will.

DEER CAUGHT IN LAKE.

A live deer was caught in the waters of Lake Ronan, Mont., recently by Messrs. Worthy, Friend and John Sullivan, who were spending the day fishing. The deer, when first seen, was swimming in the lake and the party immediately gave chase in a rowboat. The deer was overtaken and caught.

The most exciting part of the episode occurred when shallow water was reached, as the deer exhibited his ability to kick and strike. The fishermen were a match for him, however, and he was brought home to Whitefish tied and trussed up in the auto.

17-YEAR-OLD LAD ON LAST LEG "AROUND THE WORLD."

Alexander Grunwaldt, a seventeen-year-old youth, has arrived in Sacramento, Cal., on the last leg of a jaunt around the world.

The boy left San Francisco in a vessel bound for Australia, July 26, 1912, and has been going ever since. All of his land trips were made afoot.

He makes between thirty and forty miles a day. His route was from Australia to Calcutta by water, and then by foot to Bombay, a distance of 1,200 miles. He then jumped to Africa and "hoofed" the 2,000 miles from Alexandria to Cape Town. He arrived in New York March 25 last and started immediately to walk the 3,358 miles to San Francisco.

COAL MINE TUNNELS.

Anthracite mines have over 7,000 miles of tunnels, says a writer in the Wall Street Journal. Of these, 2,000 are in the Schuylkill region which ships about 28 per cent. of the total anthracite production. In the Lehigh and Wyoming regions, which furnish the remaining 72 per cent. of output, there must be over 5,000 miles of tunnels.

These underground roads are a great expense. All the coal that can be recovered from them has been taken out. The number of tunnels is constantly growing, which adds to the cost of the mines. Water that runs into these underground passages must be steadily pumped out to protect adjacent workings, and air must be forced in to prevent the formation of dangerous gases. To protect the surface and make possible the recovery of a little more coal, large sums are spent annually for pumping refuse back into the workings by hydraulic process.

A further problem of large cost is the timbering of the mines. Pennsylvania timber has long been stripped from the hills and yellow pine from the South must be brought in. Mine timbers and lumber cost the operators \$5,000,000 annually.

THE NINE WONDERS

— OR —

THE ROUGH RIDERS OF THE DIAMOND FIELDS

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XV.

A DESPERATE GAME WITH DESPERATE CHANCES.

Jack Tilman followed, and after two strikes had been called on him smashed the ball to right field and sprinted for first. He was put to sleep within a foot of the base.

"Two out!" called the umpire.

Ed McCoy next went to the bat and smashed the first ball delivered straight into the hands of centre field.

"Three out!" called the umpire, and the nine retired to the field.

Once more in the box, the Rough Riders' pitcher coolly waited for the batsman to get ready. The first ball he delivered was knocked to right field, and the batsman started for first base. Jack Tilman failed to stop it, and chased it. Before he recovered it the batsman dashed for second and he sent the ball whizzing to head him off at that point. Harry Moore failed to catch it, and it bounded away beyond him to left field.

Quick as a flash the base-runner dashed to third. Crenshaw chased the ball, threw it to third, but not in time to stop him. It was a three-bagger, and the friends of the home team yelled themselves hoarse over it.

The Rough Riders laughed at the mishaps that enabled him to make three bases instead of one, and took it good-naturedly.

The next man at the bat was pitched out, and the third one, after two strikes had been called on him, smashed a hot grounder to right field for first, while the man on third base swept across the home plate like a cyclone.

The fourth had two strikes called on him, but the third ball he struck to left field, which landed the man at first on second, where the ball met him with so little difference as to time that judgment was called.

"Safe," said the umpire.

"Not so; he is out!" yelled a strong-lunged man on the grandstand, and hundreds of others repeated it.

"He is safe!" the umpire called out again, whereupon hundreds of others vociferously yelled that he was out, whilst as many more on the other side claimed that he was safe, and the result was a tremendous uproar.

"Play ball!" cried the umpire, and the next man went to the bat. The uproar continued, though, until it looked as if trouble would result. Teddy Robinson motioned to the pitcher to hold up and spoke to the umpire.

"Umpire," said he, "I don't wish to have anybody dissatisfied with anything done on these grounds during the game."

"Oh, that's all right," was the reply. "There are always a lot of fellows who kick on general principles."

"Very true," assented Teddy, "but I think I can put a stop to it if you will allow me just two minutes' time to do it."

"All right, go ahead," said the umpire, and Teddy wheeled and held up his hand for silence.

"My friends," he called out, "as captain of the visiting team I wish to protest against any of our friends finding fault with decisions of the umpire. Whatever decision he makes we are bound under the rules of the game to submit to without protest. I believe that he has decided right in every instance thus far, and I hope that from now on to the last inning no one will protest against any decision made by him."

"Good boy—good boy," roared hundreds of men all over the field.

Then the game proceeded with the result that one more run was made by the home team before they were retired.

The fourth inning resulted in no runs for either side. The fifth and sixth resulted in the same way, but in the seventh the score was evened up until it stood four to four.

Naturally the vast crowd looked upon both teams as about evenly matched, with the exception that the Rough Riders' pitcher was, perhaps, the best of the two.

In the eighth inning the home team forged ahead one run. So great was the excitement that a well-known sporting man on the grandstand yelled out:

"Five thousand dollars even money that St. Louis wins!"

No one took him up, and again he sung out:

"Five against three-fifty that St. Louis wins!"

Still he was not called, and he yelled out a third time:

"Two to one on St. Louis!"

Instantly Parry Parton called out:

"I'll see that bet, old man, and take ten thousand dollars' worth of it."

"All right," was the reply, and in a few moments the bet was made.

"Now, my boys," yelled Parry, "if you'll make two runs in this last inning I'm twenty thousand dollars in; if you don't, I'm ten thousand dollars out."

"All right," sung out Teddy Robinson; "we'll do better than that."

They went to the bat, with Ed McCoy the first to swing the willow.

He let one ball pass him, and it rested in the hands of the catcher.

"One strike!" called the umpire.

When the second was delivered he smashed it to center field with tremendous force. It was a hot grounder, and fairly scorched the grass as it went. He dashed to first, and took a desperate chance to reach second. He got there by a slide that took him between the legs of the baseman amid a tremendous roar from the crowd.

Jack Tilman followed him with a ball to left field that sent him to third, while he stopped at second.

"Now, Zeb," said Teddy to Martin, "bring Eddie home."

Zeb smashed the ball to right field; where it got away from the fielder and had to be chased. Eddie dashed across the home plate, while Tilman rushed for second, thus evening up the score.

Harry Moore was the next to take up the willow, and smashed out a hot grounder to left field. Zeb rushed for second, while Jack darted for third. The ball was sent to third to head him off, but he passed it before the ball reached there, and took one chance in a hundred of getting to the home plate.

The third baseman caught the ball, wheeled to throw it to the home plate, but in doing so gave his ankle a twist that threw him flat on his left side.

Jack dashed across the plate, while Zeb pushed on and stopped at second.

The yelling of the crowd was like a storm at sea.

Jimmie Elliot then took up the willow, and after missing two balls smashed a high one and was caught out. Then Teddy took it up, and, letting two balls pass, smashed out a two-bagger to right field, on which Martin reached the home plate, while he himself rested at second.

The home team was amazed at the desperate chances taken by the Rough Riders as well as the success that had attended them. Three runs had been made, placing them two ahead on the score.

Then Tom Knatt, the pitcher, took up the bat, but was caught out on a high ball. Patten followed and met a similar fate.

The nine retired to the field, and the home team went to the bat with the knowledge that they must make three runs to win.

The first man to take up the willow was pitched out. The ball seemed to dodge about like a leather-winged bat.

The second man shared the same fate, and the third, when two strikes had been called on him, seemed to lose every particle of courage and energy. As he stood facing the pitcher the vast crowd stood up under a silence that was almost oppressive.

He struck listlessly at the third ball, and knocked it to right field, where it was caught by Jack Tilman.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STRANGER—"WON, BY ALL THAT'S HOLY."

The defeat was a crusher. The vast crowd roared and cheered for many minutes. The band played, but not a note could be heard. Men who had backed the home team, could have been picked out anywhere in the crowd by the look of dismay on their faces.

Up on the grandstand hundreds of men crowded around Parry Parton to congratulate him on the great sum he had won. Not one in ten knew him; even many ladies offered their hands in congratulation, and to one of them he remarked that he was a single man and unengaged.

The ladies laughed and one said it was a pity he didn't have a wife to help him spend the money he had won that day.

"I want one to help me keep it," he laughed, "not to spend it."

"You can find plenty of them to help you take care of it," said an elderly woman, "but a man who bets his money on games and races is never sure of his future."

"Madam," said he, "I never bet on anything but those boys, and I'm going to back them in every game they play this season, for they are my boys and I know what they can do."

"Do you know them?" the lady asked.

"Every one of them, madam, for I am their manager."

"Oh, indeed," she exclaimed. "Are you Mr. Parton?"

"That's my name, madam."

"Then you know my son, Henry Coppinger?"

"What?" he exclaimed, "are you Henry's mother? I know him well, for we have been on the road together many a time. He travels for Wellman & Co."

"Yes," she replied, "and he seldom writes a letter to us at home without mentioning the good time he had whenever he ran across you in his travels, and in the last letter we had from him he said that he had heard you had left the road to manage a baseball nine you had found somewhere out in the woods, and thought you had made an awful mistake."

Parry laughed heartily, and remarked:

"You have just seen the kind of mistake I've made, for I have made five years' salary on this game alone. Just tell Henry when you write to him that you saw me."

She introduced several ladies to him, one of whom was a niece of hers. She was a very beautiful girl, and carried in her hand a bouquet of roses.

"Mr. Parton," said she, "will you please give this bouquet to the pitcher of your team, and tell him that I send them to him because he is the only man in the box I ever knew who could pitch a ball without squirming and twisting as though he had a fit or an attack of cramp."

Parry took the roses and laughed heartily, promising to deliver them to Tom with her message.

"And let me say to you," he added, "that every member of that nine is a square, manly fellow, and his family respectable in every sense of the term."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear that," said the young lady, "for as a general thing we are inclined to be distrustful of sporting people."

"Mr. Parton," said Mrs. Coppinger, "I hope you will call on us before you leave the city, for I am sure it would be pleasing to Henry to know that you did so."

"I should be pleased to call," said Parry, "but I am not sure that I may be able to find time to do so, as I have my boys to look after, which you know is a great responsibility in a city like St. Louis."

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

Miss Nina Lindley, who has been stenographer and law student for the last eleven years in the office of Thomas & Foley, Crawfordsville, Ind., has been admitted to membership in the firm, which is now known as Thomas, Foley & Lindley. Miss Lindley is a graduate from the law school at Indiana University, where she spent three years in special study. She was the only woman member of her class.

To be nearly stung to death by bees and then to almost suffer cremation, was the experience of Albert Bergmann, an employee of the St. Paul road. Recently he visited a honey tree and was terribly stung about the hands and face. To alleviate the suffering he had his hands bandaged and alcohol poured on in quantity. Later he lighted a match and the fumes of the alcohol caught fire, burning the bandage and his hands before it was extinguished.

Fred Westphal, son of a pioneer miller, was banished from his native town of Alameda, Cal., for the remainder of his life, with the alternative of three months in jail. Westphal left home. The youth within nine months has been sued for divorce and for back wages by an employee and has been arrested by the police four times on various charges, the last time for disturbing the peace. "You will not be permitted to set foot on your native soil again. You have disgraced it," said the police judge who sentenced him.

Reports to the State Comptroller indicate that the hunters of the northern counties of the State have practically exterminated the mountain lions. In July only four mountain lions were killed in California, as against close upon 200 for the same period a decade ago. Three of the four were killed in the southern counties—one each in Los Angeles, Tulare and Kern, the fourth one being killed in Humboldt County. The bounty paid for the pelts by the State was \$80 for June. Indications are that efforts of stock raisers during the past quarter of a century have resulted in the practical extinction of the animal. Bounties have been paid upon 22,000 mountain lions in the past twenty-five years.

Hundreds of persons crowded Highland Park, Pittsburgh, Pa., the other day while policemen, firemen and water bureau employees worked to save Charles Carpenter, a diver, who was lost in a 51-inch pipe connecting two reservoirs in the park. Carpenter had entered the main to remove an obstruction, and was imprisoned when the cable snapped and the heavy iron door dropped behind him. When he did not respond to signals another diver went down and found the door closed. The air pumps were kept going while other divers worked to open the door and still others sought for the second entrance to the pipe. Finally after five hours the door was lifted and Carpenter's body was located. He had been dead only a few minutes.

The Cedar Rapids (Iowa) National Bank was held up and robbed of \$21,300 recently by a lone robber, who, at the point of a revolver, compelled Leo Perrin, the paying teller, to open the vault, and afterward locked him in it. Perrin was discovered about fifteen minutes later in a state of temporary insanity as the result of his experience. His condition was said to be serious. The robber is believed to have been in the building all night. Perrin was in the bank early in the morning to get out currency shipments for the banks of neighboring towns, and had just opened the outer door of the vault when the man stepped before him, held a revolver to his head and ordered him to open the remaining doors. As soon as the currency safe was reached the bandit calmly helped himself to bundles of the money and then backed out, slamming the outer door on the teller.

The discovery that thousands of adult Pacific hump-backed salmon have come up the Penobscot River to the Bangor salmon pool to spawn recently is taken by experts to mean that the United States Fisheries Department experiment of planting millions of humpbacked fry from the Pacific Coast in Maine waters is proving a success. It now seems likely that the humpbacked salmon will become an article of commerce of as much importance in Bangor as on the Pacific Coast. For the past three years the Fisheries Department has been bringing Pacific salmon fry across the Continent, hatching them to finger-length size in Maine hatcheries and then planting them along the coast. It now seems that they mature just as on the Pacific, and it is certain that they are spawning in the Penobscot River at the same time that they do on the Pacific Coast. As the waters of the coast of Maine are much the same regarding temperature and other conditions as those of the Columbia River, there is every prospect that the fish will thrive.

While many have spent quantities of money to stay out of the chain gang, Harold Hammond is perfectly willing to put up some real coin of his own to get in the chain gang at Dalton, Ga., and his proposition has been accepted by Capt. Forrester, warden. Hammond was confined in the Whitfield gang, and a short time ago he made a successful escape. Recently the warden got a letter from him in which Hammond stated that if he would be received with open arms he was willing to pay his own expenses to Dalton and surrender to the authorities. His offer was not, however, without certain provisions which will make his home-coming in the nature of the revival of the Prodigal Son dodge. He doesn't want any fatted calf slain in his honor, being satisfied with the food he formerly received, but he does want to re-enter the family as if nothing had happened. Capt. Forrester has written him to return and, in view of his unusual offer, is willing to grant many concessions, going just as far as his duties will permit.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Gentryville is the home of the champion rat killers of the world, according to a report received at Rockport, Ind. It is said George Rapp, William Pittman, William Totten and Beverly Martin killed 600 full-grown rats in one day. No account was kept of the baby rats killed, but it is said there was a small army of them.

A Crookston, Minn., man has the drop on the fishes. He has a device, with a mirror placed perpendicular in the water. In front of it is a piece of plate glass, at a slant of 45 degrees. The bait is hung between the two glasses. As the fish approaches the glass he sees his image in the looking glass, and fearing another fish is after the morsel speeds up. Striking the plate glass he slides up it and lands in a convenient net in the boat.

A wooden statue representing a man in armor has been erected in Vienna by one of the war relief committees. Any one who subscribes as much as twenty cents is permitted to drive a nail in the statue, it being hoped that ultimately the whole statue will be covered with nail heads, so that it will look as if covered with real armor. It is then intended to preserve the statue as an emblem of Austrian patriotism.

A romance, traced to an overall pocket, has been revealed in the marriage at Clinton, Ind., of R. Lee Fitts, a caramel cutter of Bloomington, Ill., and Miss Mabel Richards, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Richards of Clinton. Miss Richards is one of 130 Clinton girls employed in the Lewin overall factory of Clinton. She tucked her name and address into the pocket of a pair of overalls made last winter. The candy man, then working at Aurora, Ill., pulled the slip of paper out of a pocket of a newly-bought pair of overalls. Letters and visits were the result.

Howard Ernest Hinsley, purser of the American liner St. Louis, which arrived the other day from Liverpool, announced that it was his last voyage, after having been at sea continuously since 1867. He has rented a small house and farm on the estate of the Duke of Buccleugh, near Dumfries, Scotland, where he will spend the remainder of

his days with his family. James Cowie, formerly chief engineer of the New York, who retired three years ago, will be a near neighbor. Mr. Hinsley was born in Liverpool sixty years ago and started his sea career on the Inman liner City of Baltimore when he was 12 years old. He entered the British navy, in which he served until 1880. Rejoining the Inman Line as assistant purser, he was promoted to purser twenty-three years ago and became a naturalized American citizen when the company was incorporated as the American Line in 1888. During the Spanish-American war Mr. Hinsley was paymaster of the Harvard, now the Philadelphia. All together he has traveled 6,500,000 miles, or 260 times the distance around the earth. He will be succeeded by E. Slight, the assistant purser of the St. Louis.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Poor thing, did she take her husband's death much to heart?" "Why, she's prostrated with grief! She can't see a soul except the dressmaker."

Nell—May has a beau, hasn't she? Belle—Yes; she calls him "April Showers." Nell—What's the idea in that? Belle—He brings May flowers.

Fair Painter—I hope you don't mind my sketching in your field? Farmer—Lor', no, missie! You keep the birds off the peas better'n a' ordinary scarecrow.

She—I understand that old man Millyuns is a distant relative of yours? He—That's right. He's so distant that he isn't able to recognize me.

"A horseshoe is supposed to be a sign of good luck." "And so it is," replied the sport; "if it goes under the wire first on your horse."

"I wish," he said, "you could make pies like ma used to make." "And I," said she, "wish that you made the cash pa used to make!"

"No, Jimmie, I am not going to Maggie Mulligan's party! The Mulligans ain't in our set, an' I don't like Maggie, an' I've got nuthin' to wear, an', besides, I ain't been invited, anyhow!"

"Papa," said small Elmer, "I know why some pistols are called horse pistols." "Well, my boy, why are they so called?" asked his father. "Because they kick," replied the little philosopher.

Bobby—Ma, you said that I wasn't to eat that piece of cake in the pantry because it would make me sick. Mother—Yes, Bobby. Bobby (convincingly)—But, ma, it hasn't made me sick.

Mrs. Illington—Herbert, you are breaking my heart! Only think of their finding you at three this morning hugging a lamppost! Illington—My dear, it surely isn't possible that you are jealous of a lamppost!

THE FROZEN WORLD.

By Col. Ralph Fenton

"All aboard!"

The day was warm and sultry, and I had been strolling along the river front in quest of a few mouthfuls of fresh air when I heard the cry of "all aboard!"

One of the Staten Island boats was about to leave.

On the impulse of the moment I boarded her, and after a delightful sail down the bay I went ashore at Sailors' Snug Harbor, where is situated the home of aged and worn-out seamen.

I had often visited the "Home," and was known to most of the tars, with many of whom I had shared my last paper of fine-cut.

"How are you, Ben?" I cheerfully asked as I came across an old fellow on crutches.

Now Ben had the reputation—not undeservedly gained, either—of being a crabbed and silent man; on learning from the others that Ben had had a most adventuresome life I had many a time attempted drawing him into spinning a yarn, but always in vain.

On my previous visit to the "Home" I had given the old fellow a stick of genuine "black pigtail," and it will be seen that to this little present I am indebted for the relation of this true and thrilling tale.

"How are you, Ben?" I had asked.

The old tar's head was sulkily hung, and I thought he intended to pass me without speaking, as if he neither saw me nor knew that I had addressed him.

Then I chanced to observe that Ben was engaged in taking a sly glance at me from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

To my surprise his face lighted up presently, his head was raised and one hand went respectfully to his hair.

"How de do, capen? I wasn't 'xpectin' o' you athwart my hawse. Glad to see you, and—that was mighty good pigtail!"

"I'm glad you liked it. You shall have some more."

"When?" he said eagerly.

"I'll get it as soon as I go to the city, and you shall have it by to-morrow at the latest."

Again Ben's hand went up, and, seeing in him a disposition to talk, I sat myself down on a bench beside him.

"You've seen some startling things in your life, Ben," I suggested, to draw him out.

"Yes—yes, so I have," he said thoughtfully. "I've been shipwrecked five times—once among the cannibals. I've been nearly wasted to death in the tropics and frozen to death at the North Pole."

"The North Pole! Surely you were never there?"

"Not quite, but as near as any living man ever has been. Like to hear about it?"

"Of course. Fire ahead, and if it's a good yarn I'll keep you in pigtail for a six-month."

"Well," began Ben—"well, the way it happened was this: I was like most boys, wild to go to sea, thinking it was all pleasure and no work.

"I had been attending school, and was said to be a smart scholar, and that I would some day make my mark

in the world. Perhaps I would, had not my mind been filled with thoughts of the sea.

"To make a long story short, I went away, going to sea on a whaler. I was gone three years, returning to find my mother dead, my father married again, and so influenced by his second wife that he showed little affection for me, the only child of his first wife.

"So I became a sailor in earnest from that time.

"But to the story proper.

"The 'Nantucket,' whaler, was a stanch, good ship, commanded by Captain Douglas, a smart book seaman, tolerably fair practical seaman, and of an ambitious turn of mind.

"We were well up on the coast of Greenland by mid-summer, and had the good fortune to fall in with a drove of whales, so that in an incredibly short time we had taken in almost a full cargo.

"After that came a streak of bad luck, and a week or ten days passed without our getting a scent of a whale. During this time we had been gradually working further north, up through Davis' Strait.

"Late in August one of the seamen, who knew something of a chart, got a glimpse of the captain's, and found our position marked on it as being nearly a hundred miles nearer the pole than any vessel had ever before gone.

"As you may suppose, this created some dismay when it leaked out among the crew, all of whom knew enough by hearsay of that region to be aware that after the end of August winter was liable to close in without an instant's warning, and what would be clear water one day would be a field of ice the next.

"A committee was appointed to wait on the captain and ask him to turn south. The captain's answer was: 'Boys, many men have tried to find a passage around the north of America and have failed. The season is a remarkably open one and that thing can be accomplished now. That is our object from this minute.'

"Three days later the wind chopped around to a different quarter and blew cold and keen, and the clear blue water we had been dashing aside from our bows in showers of spray in six hours had a coating of ice of several inches in thickness.

"In twenty-four hours more the Nantucket was a prisoner.

"But a gleam of hope brightened the dull clouds of despair when of a sudden the ice field cracked and separated, leaving before them a narrow but nearly straight channel trending southwest.

"We set sail at once, but in a very few hours the ice again began to check our way. The vessel's bows and the rigging were coated thick with ice, as also the decks were rapidly becoming, and tough tars though we were, to a man we were compelled to run to the galley to warm ourselves after an exposure of less than ten minutes to the keen Arctic winds.

"Then the darkness of gloom was seen on every face, and all foreboded the worst.

"And the worst came, and speedily at that.

"Exactly how it happened no man could ever tell, but suddenly, with an almost human shriek, the Nantucket's ribs were crushed in, and water at once poured into her

hold and there froze into solid ice in the course of a few hours, the vessel's bulge forming a lever to support her for the present.

"Then we saw what a man Douglas was when misfortune came.

"We must bestir ourselves, boys," he said. "It is cold now, but it will be colder before long. We must get off the vessel and put up some sort of shelter in the lee of that big hummock, or young glacier yonder."

"Working in relays, we began to excavate a big hole in the glacier, for such it was, and the sides of this we covered with boards, and rags, and furs, and blankets.

After this was finished we laid in provisions and prepared to spend the long winter night.

"Scurvy broke out!

"In two weeks only ten of the Nantucket's crew were living, and the captain was not among them. As they died we would crawl forth at the risk of our lives and bury them in the snow. I say at the risk of our lives, for one poor fellow was frozen to death, though he was absent from the house only a few minutes.

"We were then but nine in number, and I, the boatswain, was the only officer left.

"Four more died before the return of day.

"Perhaps the horror of these last four deaths had an influence on us which saved the lives of us five, for it made us very careful how and what we ate, and induced me to take all exercise possible.

"Day came at last.

"It was only of a few minutes' duration.

"Our provisions and fuel by this time were run very low, and we all were on the watch for the next breaking of the darkness to see about the Nantucket, for she would supply both by exerting ourselves.

"Day came again, and with it the disagreeable knowledge that the Nantucket was—gone!

"How or where she went we never knew, but judged that the ice had opened and she had been swallowed up.

"It was a situation now to bring dismay to the stoutest heart. Here were we, five strong men, with little or no food, and but scant supply of fuel. At once we began to husband both, hoping against hope, and praying to hasten the coming of summer.

"It was a blue day with us when the last mouthful of food was eaten. The effect on our minds I cannot describe, save as to myself. Me it made determined to fight harder for life, to not give up.

"Meanwhile the days were growing longer, and I began to pop out of doors for a few minutes at a time in hopes of being able to discover a walrus or a seal which would afford us food.

"Three awful days dragged their weary length. Living on a starvation allowance for weeks before, we were easy victims to hunger, and more rapidly than one would suppose did our strength desert us.

"Day dawned again, and I once more crawled forth on my hopeless errand, praying as I went that heaven in mercy would deliver us from our strait.

"That prayer was heard and answered, for I had not gone a dozen feet from the door when I saw before me an immense polar bear. Seemingly as much startled as myself, the animal began to retreat.

"In my fear lest he should escape I forgot that the only weapon I had was my sheath-knife, and thus illy armed for an encounter, I gave pursuit.

"He led me a chase of nearly a quarter of a mile, when apparently thinking he was acting a cowardly part, he suddenly turned and prepared to fight at a juncture when I had arrived too close to take flight in my turn.

"I could feel the color leave my cheeks, could feel my knees trembling beneath me; but there was no help for it, and drawing my knife I prepared for the battle.

"I aimed at cutting the brute's throat, and in fact gashed it badly, though not enough to more than anger the bear, which in a twinkling had me in his grasp and was hugging me to death.

"It was a fearful struggle, and more than once did I believe my last moment had come.

"One hand was free, and a kind Providence so guided it that I prodded my knife in the animal's eye.

"Bellowing with pain the bear loosened his grip a little and I drew back. I was nerved anew now, and with a sudden-born hope I located the brute's heart and struck.

"When I drew out my knife a stream of blood gushed in its wake, and with glazing eyes the bear fell. I had plunged my knife into his heart.

One moment I looked at the flowing blood, then fell on the ice and put my lips to the wound and drank long and deep and arose refreshed and strengthened.

"But it struck me that I must return to the house for assistance, and thither I hurried.

"Night came before we were ready to go, and we had to wait for day's coming.

"Light was yet two hours' distant when Ned Benson awoke me, saying:

"Don't it feel warmer to you?"

"Yes, but it's only fancy," I said, but I changed my mind when I went out after daylight came.

"There was a warm breeze from the south, and it was like an April day in New York.

"Armed with rifles, Ned and I started for the place where the bear was lying, carrying our weapons in case they were needed for another of the brutes.

"We had not gone a dozen steps before Ned cried:

"Clear water ahead! Summer is at hand!"

"Sure enough, there was a big stretch of open water, and—as I looked back it seemed to me I saw the glacier trembling and tottering and slowly sinking.

"I called wildly to the others, and righting the long boat they ran her on her keel a distance of a few hundred yards, barely reaching a safe distance when the ice tumbled.

"The ice began to break up fast now, and Ned and I hurried on. Suddenly rising a little ascent we came upon the bear lying as I had left her, but upon her body were her two half-grown cubs, who growled at us most viciously and showed fight.

"We killed the cubs, and thus were supplied with provisions anew. Having cut up the bear, we made sail in the long boat and went south as fast as we could.

"Heaven favored us, and we five escaped with our lives, being picked up finally by a whaler.

"And that is the story of the winter I passed in the Frozen World!"

NEWS OF THE DAY

"Prepare to live and you will be prepared to die," said the Rev. R. G. Callison, addressing a large congregation in the tabernacle of the Oregon Christian Church, Turner, Ore., convention. As he spoke he sank to the floor of the pulpit and died within a few seconds. Death was due to apoplexy.

An Eastern musician and an authority on violins, while in Freeman, S. Dak., recently, inspected an old violin belonging to Joshua R. M. Hofer, and declared it to be one of the famous Stradivarius makes. Hofer, at various times, has refused offers of \$1,000 for the old instrument, and the musical expert has told him that these old violins are selling for from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

The unearthing of a great temple at Memphis, Egypt, was announced by the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Dr. Clarence L. Fisher, curator of the Egyptian section of the museum, was the leader of the Eckley B. Coxe, Jr., expedition to Egypt, which made the discovery. The temple, it is estimated, is of the period of Rameses II., and was erected more than 3,000 years ago. While no definite data can be given out at this time, Egyptologists are inclined to believe that the temple is one that was built by Seti I., and the same one as described in Herodotus.

The London Daily News says: "Painted snipers, who are indistinguishable from the landscape, are the latest invention of the Germans. Writing from a hospital, Private Searby, of the Second Royal Fusiliers, who has been wounded in the arm, says his tunic was perforated by seven bullets, one of which tore off the glass and hands of his watch. He adds: "It is not ordinary rifle fire which is doing the damage. It is machine guns and snipers. The faces and even the rifles of the latter are painted green, so you get close on them before you see anything at all."

The Atlantic fleet is again to be put to the test of protecting the Eastern seaboard from invasion by a supposed foreign fleet. Admiral Frank F. Fletcher, its commander, announced that officers of the Naval War College were at work mapping out the problems of another war game, to take place after the target practise in Narragansett Bay next fall. According to Admiral Fletcher, the maneuvers will be based on lessons derived from the mimic war of last June, when the "enemy" fleet accomplished its purpose in effecting a landing on the shores of Chesapeake Bay. As in the previous war game, it is expected that the Atlantic fleet will be called on to protect the coast from Eastport, Me., to Cape Hatteras.

Two hundred and eight automobile rural delivery routes, distributed over eight States, went into operation Aug. 2. This means that approximately 11,440 miles of rural post roads will be traversed six days a week during August by

automobile. In all 298 motor routes have been authorized. Two experimental routes were put into operation at Quarryville, Pa., on July 1. Other authorizations include eighty-three routes effective September 1, and five effective October 1. The routes vary from fifty to sixty-four miles in length, and will be operated from nine to twelve months a year. The routes are distributed by States as follows: Oklahoma, 88; California, 24; Georgia, 64; Colorado, 1; Kansas, 3; Louisiana, 1; Florida, 13, and Texas, 14.

In spite of the authorities, woman is forging her way into the various gaps in the community, in which the war gives her an opportunity to prove her usefulness and patriotism. In addition to the various other offices women are now filling, quite a number are serving as postwomen. The districts around London are gradually becoming accustomed to the trim figures of smart young girls distributing missives of a business and social nature to the various eager recipients. Young men who never bothered about the time their letters arrived before leaving for their work now rise at least an hour earlier in order to hear the fair letter carrier give the famous "rat-tat" at the front door.

On Oct. 10, 1892, a mail sack left in the waiting-room of the Northern Pacific station, Detroit, Mich., was slit open and a valuable package of bank mail taken out. Nothing was found of the thief nor of the package until recently, when J. I. Peterson found a package of mail matter under the eaves in the attic of his home. On investigation it was found to be the missing package stolen twenty-three years ago. It was delivered to the local postmaster and by him sent to the dead-letter office. One of the letters in the stolen package was opened. It was from a young man of the town to his fiancée, demanding that she let him know by return mail whether she would marry him or not, as he would not be put off any longer.

The yellow silk stockings of a society girl have led to an interesting scientific discovery. The young lady in question was invited to a house party with half a dozen belles at a country home near Atlanta, Ga., where mosquitoes are prevalent. One evening they were so acutely active making savage attacks upon the silken-clad ankles and nether limbs of all the girls but one "particular one." No body could understand why the mosquitoes had not bitten her. Suddenly somebody observed that while all the other girls were wearing hosiery of black and white, this one's stockings were of a pronounced yellow shade. There was a physician in the party who knew that insects of various kinds had been found peculiarly susceptible to colors, and he went about making experiments, with the result that he found that mosquitoes, at least those in this locality, will never alight on anything that is yellow in tone. "Wear yellow," says the "Doc," "and you will escape mosquito bites."

INTERESTING ARTICLES

CORNERS OF FOUR STATES.

The only place in the United States where four States corner is a remote desert section sixty-five miles south of Dolores, Colo. There, a large cobblestone monument marks the common corner of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.

PETRIFIED BIRD'S NEST.

J. S. Hilley, of Kirkland, Wash., has in his possession a petrified bird's nest containing four petrified eggs. The nest and eggs are said to be a perfect petrified specimen.

They were found by a miner in 1869 in the lower end of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Mr. Hilley obtained them fifteen years ago and has since exhibited them in many parts of the country.

BIGGEST LOAD OF WHEAT.

What J. R. Baker, president of the Hutchinson Board of Trade, declares is the biggest load of wheat ever hauled to market in Kansas on a single wagon was received by the Rock Mill and Elevator Company recently.

The load was weighed by the Rock Company's scales and tipped the beam at 12,850 pounds, or more than six tons of wheat. There were on the wagon 214 bushels ten pounds of wheat.

WAR HORSES IN MISSOURI.

When fifty or sixty horses die in Lathrop, Mo., a day no one pays any particular attention to it. It's only the normal death rate. For in Lathrop at present there are between 30,000 and 40,000 horses and mules purchased for the British army. Because of lack of transports to take them across the Atlantic they have been accumulating, until now all Clinton County is virtually one vast feed lot.

The disaster of the sunken road at Waterloo was duplicated. Eleven hundred horses were being driven along a road a short distance east of town when they came to a ravine partly filled with water from the heavy rains. The horses stampeded and the front ranks were swept into the muddy pool. Many of the frantic animals were trampled to death, the bodies filling the ravine.

In the Boer war in 1901 England handled 182,000 animals through the depot here, and that number has possibly already been equaled.

15-CENT BALL AT NEWARK.

All talk of the Federal League leaving Newark was set at rest when it was announced that Harry F. Sinclair and P. T. Powers, owners of the Newark team, had decided to retain their Newark franchise permanently. Another thing decided upon was a reduction in the prices of admission, to go into effect upon the return of the Newark team from its Western trip. The new scale is to be 15 cents for the bleachers, instead of 25, as heretofore; 25 cents for seats in the extreme sections of the covered stand, for which 50 cents has been charged, while for seats in the main body of

the grandstand the price will be 50 cents, a reduction of 25 cents from the former scale. The price of box seats is to be \$1, as before.

When the Peps left for their swing around the Federal circuit there were rumors that Powers and Sinclair were going to give up Newark and seek a more lucrative location, for the attendance, which had been all that could be desired at the start, had fallen off greatly. Poor transportation facilities was the principal cause, and the stories that Powers and Sinclair were ready to quit had the effect of arousing Jersey fans, and the Freeholders of both Essex and Hudson counties voted to permit the Public Service Railway Company to lay tracks over the Jackson street bridge. This will make the ball grounds accessible from all parts of Newark, thus remedying what was regarded as the Feds' greatest handicap.

It was also announced that the Feds' owners have given Manager Bill McKechnie full authority to strengthen the team by the acquisition of new players.

CENSUS OF AMERICAN SHIPS.

Acting under orders of Secretary Daniels, with the approval of the President, the Board of Inspection and Survey for ships of the Navy Department is making a survey of all the American merchant vessels with a view to their use by the Government in the event of war. Every ship which flies the American flag is being taken into consideration, its tonnage, condition, speed, etc., noted, together with its availability as an auxiliary of the United States Navy.

Despite the apparent significance of this action, navy officials say that it merely is a precaution which is being taken to prevent a possible recurrence of the situation which prevailed at the outset of the Spanish war. At the beginning of that conflict there was a great demand for ships to be used as colliers, transports, supply ships, etc., as well as those which might be armed as auxiliary cruisers. But it was found that the Navy Department had made no list of such available vessels, and did not know where to look for them. As a result the Government bought vessels at fancy prices, far beyond their worth.

When asked about the significance of this action navy officers said it did not mean that the Government was preparing for war or that recent events had made war any more probable than it had been for months. It was merely a precautionary measure in the interest of preparedness, they declared. As a result of it, if there should be a conflict with Germany, this Government would know exactly how many merchant ships were available, their tonnage and seaworthiness.

At the office of Admiral Benson, Chief of Personnel, it was said that the survey would include the vessels on the Great Lakes as well as ocean-going ships.

The Government already has in hand a complete list of the German merchant ships, as well as the two warships, now interned in American waters.

ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/2 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MAGIC PIPE.



Made of a regular corn-cob pipe, with rubber figures inside; by blowing through the stem the figure will jump out. Made in following figures: rabbits, donkeys, cats, chickens, etc.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FINGER THROUGH THE HAT.



Having borrowed a hat from your friend, push your finger through the crown of it, and it is seen to move about. Though very amusing to others, the owner of the hat does not see the joke, but thinks it means to destroy his hat; yet when it is returned it is perfectly uninjured. Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.



Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 ins.

long. Price, 25c., postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE FOUNTAIN RING.



A handsome ring connected with a rubber ball which is concealed in the palm of the hand. A gentle squeeze forces water or cologne in the face of the victim while he is examining it. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing ring in water same as a fountain pen filler. Price by mail, postpaid, 12c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

NOISY HANDKERCHIEF.



A great deal of amusement may be had with this little article. It imitates the blowing of the nose exactly, except that the noise is magnified at least a dozen times, and sounds like the bass-horn in a German band. This device is used by simply placing it between the teeth and blowing. The harder the blow the louder the noise. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE MAGNETIC TOY.



A handsome metal, highly magnetized toy. A horseshoe and a spiral wire furnished with each top. When spun next to the wires, they make the most surprising movements. You can make wires of different shapes and get the most peculiar effects. Price, 5c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

NEW YORK IN A NUTSHELL.



25 Colored Views of the Big City in an English walnut shell, prettily hinged with ribbon, to which a small tag is attached. The nut contains 25 beautifully lithographed views of the principal points of interest in and around New York City. You can address the tag, put on a stamp, and mail it. A nice souvenir to mail to your distant friends. Price, by mail, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

MANAS.



This interesting toy is one of the latest novelties out. It is in great demand. To operate it, the stem is placed in your mouth. You can blow into it, and at the same time pull or jerk lightly on the string. The mouth opens, and it then cries "Ma-ma," just exactly in the tones of a real, live baby. The sound is so human that it would deceive anybody.

Price, 12c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE PHANTOM FINGER.



As these fingers are cast in moulds in which a person's fingers have been encased, they are a lifelike model of the same. The finger can be made to pass through a person's hat or coat without injury to the hat or garment. It appears to be your own finger. A perfect illusion. Price, 15c.; 2 for 25c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

COIN PURSE



You cannot lose your change by carrying one of these handy purses. They are made of the finest Morocco, with a clasp that simply will not unfasten itself. Within are heavy rubber receptacles for holding nickels, dimes, and quarters. Each compartment holds a number of coins. They cannot be abstracted unless you take them out yourself. Pickpockets hate these purses.

Price 25c. each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.

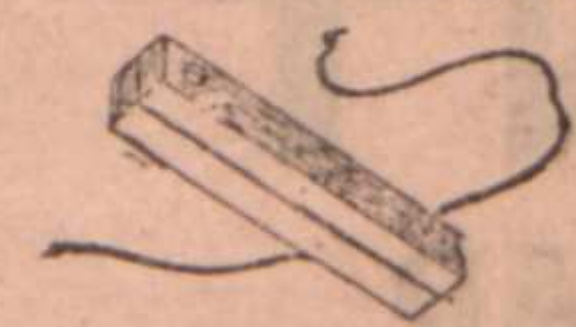


Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price by mail, 10c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

STRING PUZZLE



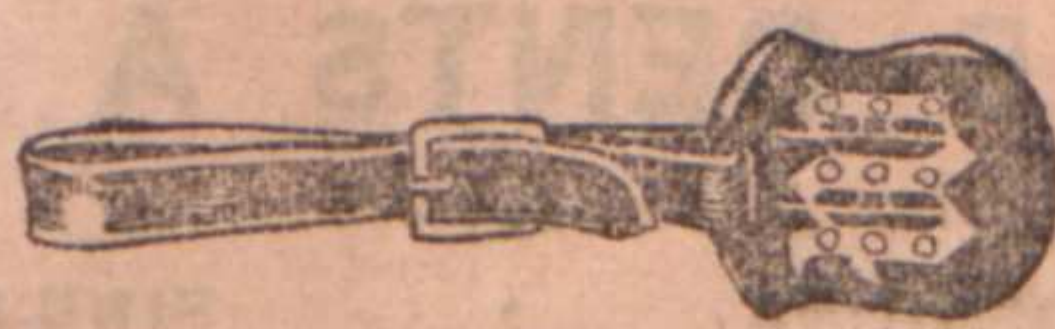
This puzzle is a wonder. It consists of two pieces of wood. A hole is bored through the upper end of both. A red string passes through the holes. Take a knife, insert it between the

wooden blocks and cut upwards. You separate the pieces of wood, and the string is apparently cut in two. Close the blocks together, seize an end of the string, and you can pull the entire cord through the holes, absolutely—not cut. Very mystifying.

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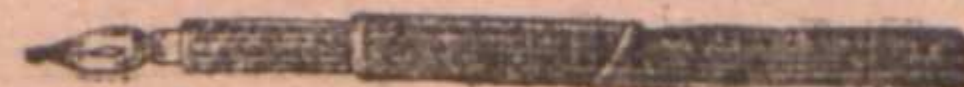
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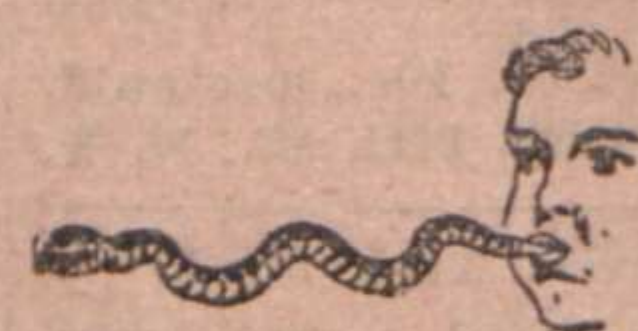
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